Life of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

PodBio – Vol 4



Achieve Noble Character

Life of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

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Life of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

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Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses some lessons from the Life of the Great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Fourth Rightly Guided Caliph of Islam, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him.

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of the qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Life of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

Life in Mecca Before Accepting Islam

A Blessed Birth

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was born inside the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 53.

Ali, like all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, throughout his life, had a strong bond with the Mosques as he knew they were the best places on Earth.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

A Blessed Upbringing

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was raised by his uncle, Abu Talib, the father of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, after the death of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. Years later and prior to announcing Prophethood, a severe financial crisis befall the people of Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised his uncle Al Abass, may Allah be pleased with him, that they should aid Abu Talib by taking one of his children into their homes. Al Abass, took Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 67-68.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was raised by the best person and therefore adopted noble character from a very young age. Muslims must ensure they too give their children the correct upbringing.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds Muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a Muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

Avoiding Blind Imitation

Even prior to the advent of Islam, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, never prostrated to or worshipped an idol. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 182.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, used his common sense and did not blindly follow the people around him in worshipping lifeless idols.

Blind imitation of one's forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth, such as Judgement Day. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

Truthfulness

As Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was raised in the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he adopted truthfulness in all his affairs. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commissioned as a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, he invited Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, towards Islam. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he desired to discuss it with his father, Abu Talib, first. But the next day, without discussing the matter with his father, he came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam. He was around 10 years old at the time. Thus he became the first child to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 68-69.

As Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, adopted truthfulness from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he accepted the truthfulness of Islam when it was presented to him. Adopting truthfulness is an important aspect of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Life in Mecca After Accepting Islam

Sincerity to Others

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would initially prayer in secret until Abu Talib found out. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited Abu Talib towards Islam but he refused out of loyalty to his people, even though he knew it was the truth. This is proven by the fact that he told his son, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to continue following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was calling him to something which was good. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 69-70.

Abu Talib failed to accept Islam out of loyalty to his people but did not fail to show some sincerity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he offered him his protection and he did not fail to show sincerity to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for

them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Guiding Others

Even at a young age, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, aided the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with his mission, as best as he could. Abu Dharr Al Ghafari, may Allah be pleased with him, was someone who did not worship idols and believed in one God even before accepting Islam. When he heard about Islam he entered Mecca desiring to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in secret, as he was aware of the hatred of the non-Muslims of Mecca for Islam. Ali met Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with them, and after finding out about his purpose he helped set up a secret meeting between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 71-72.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the

guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

An Evil Gathering

When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began to migrate to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca understood that it was only a matter of time when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also migrates to Medina. So they held a meeting in Dar Al Nadwa, which is located in Mecca close to the house of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Even the Devil disguised as an old man joined their meeting. Members of this meeting offered their opinions on what to do with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to crush his mission but the Devil refuted them until the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, suggested his opinion. He advised to assassinate him with a group of people belonging to different tribes. This would prevent the tribe of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, waging war against them all in retaliation and they would simply pay his tribe off in order to end the affair. The Devil and all the other members of this meeting agreed with this evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 152-153.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means

disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

"…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people…"

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

Sincerity for the Prophet (PBUH)

When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca plotted to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they ordered the group assigned with this evil task to wait outside the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and attack him while he slept. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to take his place in his bed and guaranteed his safety so that he could migrate in secret. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left his home he recited the Holy Quran and Allah, the Exalted, temporarily took away the sight of the assassins. While walking through them the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, poured dirt on their heads and left. The assassins only realized what had occurred after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had left the area and when they were informed of what had occurred to them by a passer-by. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 153.

This miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

This event also highlights the great sincerity and love Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one’s relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

The Migration to Medina

Fulfilling Trusts

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina with Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. He left behind Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and ordered him to migrate to Medina after he had returned the precious belongings of the non-Muslims of Mecca which they deposited with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for safekeeping, as his reputation for honesty and trustworthiness was widely known and accepted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 155.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

The Migration

After Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, fulfilled the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to return the belongings of the people of Mecca to them which was entrusted to him, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, migrated to Medina to join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He left alone with no riding animal and the journey was therefore extremely dangerous and difficult. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 83.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina thereby leaving behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

Life in Medina During the Lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The 1st Year After Migration

A Beautiful Legacy

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina, one of the first things he did was build a house of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid An Nabawi. The land belonged to two orphaned boys, Suhayl and Sahl, may Allah be pleased with them, who offered the land for free but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused to take it for free and purchased it from them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 165-166.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a

lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themself as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themself what is their legacy?

Sincerity to the Holy Quran

Like all the Companions, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, was deeply attached to the Holy Quran and strove hard to fulfill its rights. His deep attachment and practical application of the Holy Quran are reflected in his statements regarding it. For example, he once said that the one who recites the Holy Quran, dies and still enters Hell is among those who used to take the verses of Allah, the Exalted, in jest. On another occasion he once commented that in the Book of Allah, the Exalted, are beneficial stories of those who lived before, foretelling of what will happen after and rulings on issues between people. The Holy Quran is serious and is not something to take in jest. Whoever amongst the tyrants neglects it, Allah, the Exalted, will destroy them. Whoever seeks guidance in anything else, Allah, the Exalted, will allow them to go astray. It is the strong rope, the wise reminder and the straight path. It is the Book that whims and desires cannot distort and tongues cannot mispronounce. Its wonders never end and the scholars never tire of it. Whoever quotes it, speaks the truth, whoever acts upon it, will be rewarded. Whoever judges according to it, will be just. And whoever calls people to it, will be guided to a straight path.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, once said that no verse of the Holy Quran was revealed but he knew why it was revealed, when it was revealed and regarding whom it was revealed. Allah, the Exalted, had blessed him with deep understanding and an eloquent, truthful tongue.

He also memorized the Holy Quran during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 91-92.

One must follow in his footsteps by fulfilling the rights of the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this

right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

Addressing Relevant Issues

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had a keen interest in knowledge and was not shy of questioning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over relevant and important issues. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 105.

Muslims should always concentrate on things which when clarified will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and concentrate on those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of people. Unfortunately, arguing and debating over side issues has distracted Muslims from concentrating on more important things and this is one of the reasons why the general strength of the Muslim nation has declined over time.

On another occasion, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, warned people to discuss matters of Islam which were easily understandable as he feared complicated issues would create doubts in the hearts of people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 121.

Muslims, especially preachers, must adhere to spreading the fundamental teachings of Islam to the general masses and only speak about complicated issues to those who are qualified. In this day and age, when many Muslims are failing to uphold the basic obligatory duties of Islam, it does not make sense to discuss complicated issues anyway.

Seeking Knowledge

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had a keen interest in knowledge and was not shy of questioning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over relevant and important issues. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 105.

In addition, he was one of the few who could read and write from an early age. This again highlights his thirst for knowledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 113.

He once commented that he would not sleep until he learned what Allah, the Exalted, had revealed that day to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 343.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a Muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some Muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

The Best Companion

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, remained close to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, throughout the latter's life in order to learn from him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 113.

This indicates the importance of good companionship.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way

meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Brotherhood Between Helpers & Migrants (RA)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, established brotherhood between his fellow Emigrants, the Muhajireen and the Helpers, the Ansars, may Allah be pleased with them all. He advised them to become brothers in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 215.

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

The 2nd Year After Migration

The Battle of Badr

Greatness is in Humility

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On the way to raiding a caravan the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took turns riding their camels as they had so few. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, shared one camel with Ali and Abu Lubaba, may Allah be pleased with them. When it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, turn to walk his two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, offered to take his place so he could ride on the camel. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that they were not stronger than him meaning, he was not injured or sick that he could use that as an excuse not to walk, and he added that he desired the reward of walking. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 258.

Unlike the leaders of today who refuse to face the same difficulties their followers undertake the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, shared in the difficulties faced by his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This was an indication of his great humility. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily…”

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themself if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith

found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

"And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

"And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly…"

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

The Duel

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Before the fighting commenced three non-Muslims challenged three Muslims to single combat. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, took part in this duel and killed his opponent. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 144.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has

guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

A Merciful Act

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consulted his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do with their prisoners of war. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised to execute them for their many crimes and acts of war. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked this suggestion. Then Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested to pardon them from execution and instead allow them to purchase their own freedom. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with this advice and acted on it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 305.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why

Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury…”

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you…”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

A Blessed Marriage

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah pleased with him, proposed marriage to the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her, and it was accepted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 145-146.

A father would only desire the best man to wed his daughter, therefore, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wed his daughter to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates his great virtue. One must follow this example and choose a spouse based on the teachings of Islam if they desire a successful marriage.

For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for

them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a Muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's

spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

A Simple Life

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and his wife Fatima, may Allah pleased with them, led an extremely simple life, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They gave priority to preparing for the hereafter and helping others over enjoying worldly luxuries. For example, he once said that he possessed no furniture in his home except for a ram's skin on which they slept.

Both of them worked for a living and struggled to fulfill the basic necessities of life. Once, when some prisoners of war were brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they requested him to give them a servant to help them with their chores. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused as he desired to sell the prisoners and spend the price on the poor of Medina. He gave priority to others over his own family. Later that night, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught both of them a spiritual exercise to read before going to bed and commented that was better than obtaining a servant. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 147-149.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Importance of Earning

Once Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, left his home searching for work as he was extremely hungry. He found a Bedouin woman and offered to wash her pile of date fruits in exchange for a single date. He worked until his hands became sore with boils and when he asked for his wages, he was given sixteen dates. He returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and shared some with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 147.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make

them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity in Teaching

On one occasion, during the night, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, went to the home of Ali Ibn Abu Talib and Fatima, may Allah be pleased with them, expecting them to be awake and praying the voluntary night prayer. He found them asleep and woke them up and then questioned why they were not praying. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that their souls were in the control of Allah, the Exalted, and when He willed, He would wake them up to pray. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left without replying and recited chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 54, to himself:

"…but man has ever been, most of anything, [prone to] dispute."

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 955.

Even though Ali and Fatima, may Allah be pleased with them, would regularly perform the voluntary night prayer, on this occasion they did not until they were urged to do so by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, this incident shows the sincerity Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed for teaching the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he did not conceal this incident from people, even though a foolish person could use it to criticise him.

Finally, this incident indicates the importance of the voluntary night prayer.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that

those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themself out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

The 3rd Year After Migration

The Battle of Uhud

Continuing the Mission

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The confusion and chaos increased when voices were heard claiming that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been martyred. This caused some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to lose hope as their strength and inspiration had supposedly been martyred. But Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, believed there was no reason to live on without the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so he broke the sheath of his sword and continued fighting until he saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He continued to protect him until they retreated. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-31 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 163-164.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is not physically amongst Muslims today none the less they must continue to strive for what he stood for by becoming the true ambassadors of Islam. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

Obedience in Difficulties

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina, they became aware that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were considering marching back towards Medina in order to wipe out Islam for good. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave orders for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, despite their grievous wounds and tired bodies, to move out in pursuit of the non-Muslims. When the Companions, including Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, responded positively Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 172:

“Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 67-68.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted,

according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

The 4th Year After Migration

The Banu Nadir

Forgoing Revenge

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought, they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory, they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, besieged the Banu Nadir,

the latter requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to spare their blood and instead grant them safe passage so they could evacuate the area with their belongings. Instead of taking revenge against the Banu Nadir for their evil plan, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed them to take whatever they could carry except weapons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but

also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

The Second Badr

Before leaving the Battle of Uhud, the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan, announced an appointment for the two armies to meet again at Badr the following year. When the time came the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, marched with around 1500 soldiers and camped at Badr, waiting for the non-Muslims. The non-Muslim army consisted of around 2000 soldiers but set up camp away from Badr. Allah, the Exalted, cast terror into their hearts and even though he set the appointment himself, Abu Sufyan, encouraged the soldiers to head back to Mecca. As they were frightened to engage the Muslims, they did not show any opposition to him and returned to Mecca. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained in Badr and engaged in some profitable trade. After eight days, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Badr with awe and superiority which had spread into the hearts of the Arab people. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 306-307.

Because of their firmness, Allah, the Exalted, granted the Muslims a psychological victory which echoed across Arabia more than a military victory would have.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted,

whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The 5th Year After Migration

The Battle of Ahzab

Steadfast Obedience

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug around Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to break up the non-Muslim army by offering a tribe accompanying the non-Muslim army compensation for retreating and returning to their homes. When he sought counsel from his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they enquired if this desire was a command from Allah, the Exalted, or his own choice. He replied that it was his own choice as he was witnessing how the many different tribes of Arabia descended on Medina and he desired to help his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, any way he could. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, replied that before Islam the non-Muslim army would never have dared to attack Medina and now that Allah, the Exalted, honored them with Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would never compromise on the truth even if it led to war. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 142.

Some fighting took place during this battle as some non-Muslims managed to cross the trench. Amr Ibn Abdul Wudd was a well-known non-Muslim warrior who managed to cross the trench and laid down an open challenge for a duel. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, responded to him and firstly invited him towards Islam. When Amr refused they fought until Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, killed him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 170-171.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far

reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themself or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…"

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith

found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah," and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

An Exit

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout this battle and eventually Allah, the Exalted, dispatched a fierce wind towards the non-Muslim army which completely uprooted their camp and caused them to sink into confusion and distress. The non-Muslims decided to return home as the weather was

against them and they failed to successfully penetrate the trench and enter Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 154-155.

Before the non-Muslim army left, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Hudaifa Bin Yamman, may Allah be pleased with him, to gather intel from the enemy camp but warned him not to do anything which could attract attention to himself. When he reached the enemy camp he observed the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan. Hudaifa, may Allah be pleased with him, loaded his bow and was about to fire at Abu Sufyan but withheld his hand when he remembered the orders he was given. He secretly attended one of the meetings of the non-Muslims and ascertained that they had decided to leave and head back to their homes as they were running out of supplies, the wind sent by Allah, the Exalted, was wreaking havoc on them and they could not penetrate the trench dug by the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1383-1384.

An important lesson to learn from this event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so

it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out."

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one’s control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

The Banu Qurayza

Facing Consequences

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug around Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. Eventually Allah, the Exalted, dispatched a fierce wind towards the non-Muslim army which completely uprooted their camp and caused them to sink into confusion and distress. The non-Muslims decided to return home as the

weather was against them and they failed to successfully penetrate the trench and enter Medina. The next morning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left the trench with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and returned home laying their weapons down. While wearing battle armor the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and told him Allah, the Exalted, had commanded him to move against Banu Qurayza. Allah, the Exalted, also revealed chapter 33, verses 25-27:

"And Allah repelled those who disbelieved, in their rage, not having obtained any good…And He brought down those who supported them among the People of the Scripture from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts [so that] a party you killed, and you took captive a party… And ever is Allah, over all things, competent."

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 158.

In this expedition, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, carried the banner of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the vanguard. When he reached their forts he called out that he would either be martyred or he would breach their forts. When the Banu Qurayza observed the bravery of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they agreed to accept the judgement of Sa'd Bin Mu'adth, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew very well before he became Muslim. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 172-173.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themself and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one’s authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themself accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Treason

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement and he decided that the soldiers of Banu Qurayza would be executed and their assets seized. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then declared that he had given judgement according to the ruling of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 166.

It is important to bear in mind the capital punishment for treason is a very standard judgement, even in this day and age. In addition, their crime was not against a single person but an entire city full of people. If they were exiled instead they would have only waged war with Medina again.

Allah, the Exalted, takes revenge on those who oppress His weak servants as they do not possess the power to defend nor avenge themselves.

A Muslim who understands this divine name will not oppress the servants of Allah, the Exalted, especially those who appear defenceless as in reality their Protector and Avenger is Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will take revenge for His servants during their lives on Earth and especially on Judgement Day. He will establish justice by forcing the oppressor to hand over their righteous deeds to their victim and if necessary, the victim's sins will be shifted to their oppressor. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by taking revenge against their own inner Devil which inspires them towards evil by subjecting it to the strict obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And a Muslim must seek revenge on all things which prevent them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by turning away from them.

The 6th Year After Migration

Two Tongues of Fire

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. A child, Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, overheard his evil words and reported them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was summoned but took huge oaths that he never spoke those words. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took no further action. In this connection Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 7-8:

“They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allāh until they disband." And to Allāh belong the depositories of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not

understand. They say, "If we return to al-Madīnah, the more honored [for power] will surely expel therefrom the more humble." And to Allāh belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know."

After these verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, comforted Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, by taking his ear and commenting that this was the one who devoted his ear to Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 213-215.

A sign of hypocrisy is being two-faced. This is the one who changes their behaviour in order to please different groups of people intending thereby to gain some worldly things. They speak with many different tongues showing their support to different people while harbouring dislike for them. They fail to be sincere towards people which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. If they fail to repent they will find themself in the hereafter with two tongues of fire. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

"When they meet the believers, they say: "We believe," but when they meet their evil companions (in privacy), they say: "Surely we are with you; we were merely jesting.""

Slander of Aisha (RA) – Wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Sharing Problems

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retracted her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Al Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. When the effects of the slander intensified in Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called for his two close Companions, Ali Ibn Abu Talib and

Usama Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with them, and consulted with them. They both spoke well about Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and even found further proof of her fine character by calling upon a witness, a slave girl, who worked within the house of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She also spoke nothing except good about Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 219-220.

Muslims should strive to avoid adopting a certain attitude namely, sharing their problems with too many people. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

Therefore Muslims, should only consult a few people in respect to their difficulties. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

"…So ask the people of the message if you do not know."

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only share their problems with those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only share their problems with those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…”

Letting Things Go

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retracted her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Al Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. After Allah, the Exalted, exonerated Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, of this slander her father, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased him, declared that he would no longer financially aid his relative who took part in spreading this slander. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22, encouraging him and all Muslims to forgive and overlook the mistakes of others:

“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

After this Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, retracted his declaration and continued helping his relative. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3180.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to

destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement.

The Pact of Hudaibiya

Tested for Piety

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. Eventually, when they reached close to Hudaibiya the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sat down and refused to go any further. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, understood that staying within this area was best for them instead of marching forward towards Mecca. He commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to setup camp in Hudaibiya and declared that he would accept anything the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca requested from him that day as long as it did not contradict the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 224 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

Before the treaty of Hudaibiya was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca should desist from their evil activities before Allah, the Exalted, dispatched the one who would strike their necks in support of Islam and whose heart Allah, the Exalted, had tested for piety. When he was questioned about who he was referring to, he indicated Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 173.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion

and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

The Pledge of Ridwan

Pledge of Servanthood

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message, he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in

this day and age. During the pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed one of his hands into the other and commented that his hand represented the hand of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and his pledge of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed numerous verses, such as chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 10:

"Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you,- they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward."

And chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 18:

"Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest."

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 227-228 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4066.

It is important for humanity to fulfill the pledge they made with Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

"And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.""

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person’s heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…”

True Love and Sincerity

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end because of the pact whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its coming. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote up the peace treaty. The non-Muslims objected to writing down the title of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the Messenger of Allah, the Exalted, peace and blessings be upon him, and insisted they only write his name down. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to erase his title from the document and only write his name but out of sincerity and love he could not do it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then erased his title with his own hands so that the treaty would be made. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 173-174.

One must follow in the footsteps of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, by adopting sincerity for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is

sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Evil Plots Fail

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. One of which was that if any person who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina, he or she would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca, they would not be sent back to Medina. It was obvious the non-Muslims of Mecca only demanded this as they believed it would weaken the Muslim nation by breaking their unity. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina. A Companion, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped his imprisonment in Mecca and fled to Medina. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched two men to retrieve Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, from Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, honored the agreement and handed him over to be returned to Mecca. On his way back to Mecca, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped and eventually fled to another secluded

area away from Medina and Mecca. After this occurred, whenever a Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, fled their imprisonment in Mecca, they joined up with Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him. They numbers grew till eventually they began raiding and looting the merchant caravans of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, as the pact of peace did not include them, only the citizens of Medina were included. This caused severe financial problems for the people of Mecca. They eventually send a message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pleading for him to call Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, and his force to Medina so that the raids and looting would end. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed and these men migrated to Medina peacefully. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 240.

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

"And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting…"

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the

Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”

Love for the Companions (RA)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was from him and he was from Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3719.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one loves Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, except a believer and no one hates him except a hypocrite. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3736.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim’s feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love

Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

Sincerity to the Prophet (PBUH)

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once left his home and slept in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found him while his back was covered with dust and while removing the dust from his back he called him father of dust. Because of this incident this nickname became the dearest name to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and he was pleased when people referred to him with it. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6204.

His love and sincerity for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the reason he loved the nickname he gave him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one’s relationship with these people. This is all

summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Compassion

The compassion Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had for the Muslims is noted in the following incident. When the following verse was revealed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, held a discussion with Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Chapter 58 Mujadila, verse 12:

"O you who have believed, when you [wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity…"

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to tell the people to give one gold coin in charity. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, kept telling him the people could not afford it until he suggested charity of gold equivalent to the weight of a grain of barley. Then the following verse was revealed making it easier for the people. Chapter 58 Mujadila, verse 13:

"Have you feared to present before your consultation charities? Then when you do not and Allāh has forgiven you, then [at least] establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allāh and His Messenger. And Allāh is Aware of what you do."

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 95-96.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the Muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themself is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a Muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

Divine Love

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that Allah, the Exalted, loved Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and commanded him to love Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 149.

One must follow in the footsteps of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, by adopting the characteristics which lead to divine love.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully

utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one’s reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

The Master, Protector & Friend

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that whoever he was the master, protector and friend of, then Ali Ibn Abu Talib, is also their master, protector and friend. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3713.

This, amongst many things, indicates the importance of choosing the right role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable Muslim and non-Muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why Muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins…”

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

The 7th Year After Migration

The Battle of Khaybar

Gaining the Love of Allah (SWT)

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner and Khaybar was then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

It is important for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of Ali Ibn Abu Talib and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they too become a beloved of Allah, the Exalted.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in

Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins….”

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

This Muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a Muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim’s supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

Guiding Others

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner. He was commanded to ride close to their fort and call them towards Islam before fighting them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then advised that if a single person accepted guidance through him that would be better than the most expensive and treasured herd of camels known to the Arabs. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle Muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for Muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

The Visitation (Umra)

Humility Without Weakness

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. Word reached him that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were spreading news that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were under great difficulty and distress. The non-Muslims lined up close to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, to witness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then supplicated for the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, on those who demonstrated strength on that day. In order to show their strength, they partially jogged around the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, while circumambulating it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 308.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who adopts humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and

acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they understand that their final outcome or the final outcome of others is unknown to them. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them. This reality should prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a Muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themself if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

The 8th Year After Migration

The Conquest of Mecca

Sincerity to Islam First

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting another tribe who attacked a tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware that this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they dispatched one of their leaders to Medina, Abu Sufyan, in order to reaffirm and extend the pact as they became extremely worried about the consequences of their treachery. Abu Sufyan spoke to many of the senior Companions, including Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, urging them to intercede on his behalf to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He listed the different affiliations he had with them in order to win them over such as tribal and kinship affiliations but they all replied in the same way. They refused to compromise on their faith in order to please him and did not desire to convince the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to renew the pact or not to renew it. They instead left the decision to their leader trusting in his divinely guided choice. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 381-382.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..."

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after

work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Observing Others with Mercy

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. Hatib Ibn Abu Balta, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a female messenger with a letter to Mecca informing the non-Muslims that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heading to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was divinely informed of this letter and as a result dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Miqdad Bin Amr and Zubair Bin Awaam, may Allah be pleased with them, to intercept her and bring back the letter before it reached Mecca. The plan was a success and the letter was returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who then summoned Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, and questioned him about his letter. Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that he had not apostatized nor preferred disbelief to Islam but he only wrote the letter as he had no one in Mecca who could protect his family and property there and believed that through the letter he would gain their favour and as a result they would not harm his family and property. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed he had spoken the truth. Umar Ibn Khattab, asked permission to execute Hatib, may Allah be pleased with them, for treason but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he had fought in the Battle of Badr and Allah, the Exalted, had already forgiven all the participants of the Battle of Badr. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page

379 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3007. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 60 Mumtahanah, verse 1:

"O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord. If you have come out for fighting/striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection [i.e., instruction], but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way."

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1684-1685.

Even though the intentions of Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, was not evil, as he desired to protect his family and property and full-well knew his letter to the non-Muslims would make no difference to the planned conquest of Mecca, as the non-Muslims of Mecca were already convinced of this occurring, none the less he should have remained sincere to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and entrusted his family and wealth to Allah, the Exalted. Instead of punishing him for this single mistake the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed his entire life of sacrificing for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore overlooked this single mistake.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Islam is Gentleness

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, carrying the keys to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, after taking it from the non-Muslim who was previously in charge of the keys, Uthman Bin Talha. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, requested to keep the keys with himself so that he could become the custodian of the Kaaba. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned Uthman Bin Talha, and returned the keys to him and told him that this day was a day of piety and good faith. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 408.

According to Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 4:58, Page 54, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned the keys to Uthman because Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners; and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

In response to this, Uthman accepted Islam, may Allah be pleased with him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one’s life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themself more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commits sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return then if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you…”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Sincerity to People

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina and after the conquest of Mecca, Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, was sent to the Banu Judhaymah tribe in order to call them to Islam. Even though they had already accepted Islam, due to a misunderstanding some of their tribesmen were killed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to compensate the tribe for the error. He paid compensation for those killed and compensated them for the loss of wealth and even for the water bowl of a dog. He even gave them the remaining wealth that was with him in case there was an error in compensating them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, approved of his actions. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 190.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one’s sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals

behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

The Battle of Hunayn

Victory in Obedience

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. During the battle the Muslim army was overwhelmed and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, temporarily retreated from the battlefield. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who stood his ground and remained with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But after they were summoned at the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of them pushed forward until Allah, the Exalted, granted them victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 451 and in This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 191.

This initial difficulty occurred as some of the younger Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, prior to the battle declared that their large army would not be defeated. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 25-26:

“Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of Ḥunayn, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all, and the earth was confining for you with [i.e., in spite of] its vastness; then you turned back, fleeing. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down soldiers [i.e., angels] whom you did not see and punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers.”

This incident indicates the importance of understanding that true success is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. True success is not linked to worldly possessions, great numbers or physical strength.

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for Muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day Muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many

Muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, Muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid Muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”

The Siege of Taif

Leniency and Second Chances

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. The non-Muslims of Taif were besieged for approximately 30 days but they were not conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the Muslim army to withdraw from Taif and supplicated for their guidance. Perhaps Allah, the Exalted, prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif due to the choice made years earlier, before the migration to Medina, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was given the option of destroying the people of Taif because of their maltreatment of him. But he turned down this option and instead commented that he hoped they would eventually accept Islam. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3231. This choice of protection continued and prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif.

In addition, the people of Taif did eventually take this second chance given to them by Allah, the Exalted, to accept the truth and sent a delegation to

Medina to visit the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 476.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."

The 9th Year After Migration

Noble Character Leads to Paradise

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, led an expedition to destroy the idol of Al Falas and fight against a non-Muslim tribe, the Banu Tai. Many prisoners of war were captured and brought to Medina. The daughter of Hatim Al Tai was amongst them. When she saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, walk pass she asked him to release her and spare her the malicious gloating of the Arab tribes as she was the daughter of the leader of her people. She then mentioned some of her father's qualities. He was the guardian of their sacred objects, he relieved the distressed, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave generous hospitality, provided the best of food, he spread peace and never refused the request of the needy. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that this was indeed the description of a true believer even though Hatim Al Tai was not a Muslim. He then declared the release of his daughter and commented that her father was a man who loved noble character traits and Allah, the Exalted, loves noble character traits. He concluded that no one will enter Paradise except by noble character. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 92 and in This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 191.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be

rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

The Battle of Tabuk

Trouble Makers

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, behind in Medina to look after the people. The hypocrites spread lies about the reason why he stayed behind and claimed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left behind Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, as he disliked him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was distressed by this and then left Medina and caught up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and discussed this issue with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reassured him and asked him to return to Medina to take care of the people there. He concluded that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was to him similar to how the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon him, was deputized by his brother the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. The obvious difference was that there would be no Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, after the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 7-8.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip whether it is true or not and it leads to problems between people, fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil as he always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a Muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance…”

A Muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the Holy Quran a Muslim should not harbour any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin…”

This same verse teaches Muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“…And do not spy…”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A Muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent.

Prophetic Sermon at Tabuk

A Comprehensive Advice

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the expedition reached Tabuk, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the following speech: “People, the most truthful speech is that of the Book of Allah, the Exalted. The firmest of bonds is the word (testification of faith). The best of religions is that of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. The best of ways of life is the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The most noble of speech is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The finest of narratives is the Holy Quran. The best of practices are those sanctioned by Allah, the Exalted. The worse of practices are those innovated. The best guidance is that of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The most noble of deaths is being killed as a martyr. The most blind thing of all is going astray after guidance. The best of deeds are those that are beneficial. The best guidance is that which is followed (not innovated). The worse blindness is that of the (spiritual) heart. The upper hand (giving charity) is better than the lower hand (the one who receives charity). That which is little yet suffices is better than that which is much but wasteful. The worse apology is when death is at hand. The worse repentance is on Judgement Day. There are those people who only attend the Friday prayers at its end.

There are those people who only mention Allah, the Exalted, in vain. The worse of sins is a lying tongue. The best riches are those of the soul (contentment). The best of qualities is piety. The pinnacle of wisdom is the fear of Allah, the Exalted. The best quality within the heart is that of certainty (of faith). Doubting is from disbelief. Wailing in mourning is an act from the age of ignorance (pre-Islamic era). Fraud is of the soil spread in Hell. (Most) Poetry comes from Satan. Wine is the aggregate of sin. Women (for men and men for women) are the snares of Satan. Youth is an offshoot of madness (due to lack of control). The worse income is from interest. The worse food is consuming the wealth of orphans. The happy man is he who is warned by (the actions of) others. One of you has only to move four arm lengths away for the matter (death) to lead on to the hereafter. The fundamental of an action is determined by its results. The worse of narratives are those of untruth. All that is to come is near at hand. To swear at a believer is an outrage. To fight a believer is disbelief. To eat his flesh (backbiting) is disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. The sanctity of his property is as the sanctity of his blood. Whoever takes an (false) oath by Allah, the Exalted, gives the lie to Him. Whoever seeks His forgiveness shall be forgiven. Whoever gives pardon, Allah, the Exalted, will pardon. Whoever suppresses anger, Allah, the Exalted, will reward. Whoever remains firm against calamity, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate. He who desires fame, Allah, the Exalted, will discredit. He who remains firm, Allah, the Exalted, will doubly reward. He who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will punish. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. I seek forgiveness for myself and for you." This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 16-17.

Purifying the Holy Pilgrimage

True Devotion

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to announce that only a Muslim could take part in the Holy Pilgrimage after that year. Previous to this non-Muslims would perform the Holy Pilgrimage but according to their own misguided customs. Prior to this announcement and in that year the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of the Holy Pilgrimage. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 48-49 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 150-151.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to join the pilgrims in order to make this announcement public. When Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, met him he immediately enquired whether he was sent to take over the leadership from him or to deliver a message. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he was only sent as a messenger. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2996.

Neither Abu Bakkar or Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, were interested in leadership rather, they only desired to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This sincerity is the essence of faith.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themself and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere Muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one’s character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the

tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

True Beauty

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The delegation consisted of two men who after reaching Medina changed their travelling clothes for expensive and extravagant clothes and also put on gold rings. When they greeted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he did not reply to them nor speak to them. The delegates then questioned some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, regarding the situation. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, advised them to change back into their traveling clothes and take off their gold rings. When they did so and returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he replied to their greeting and spoke to them. He told them that when they first came to him in their extravagant clothes the Devil was with them so he ignored them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 72.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a Muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themself as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to

acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themself. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, such as their dependents.

Christian Delegation Visits Medina

Manifest Proof

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina a Christian delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After a lengthy debate with the stubborn Christian priests, chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 61, verse revealed:

“Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you - say, "Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allāh upon the liars [among us]."”

The Holy Quran has proven to the Christians that none of their reasons which gave rise to their belief in the divinity of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, were valid. The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was a human being whom Allah, the Exalted, had created in a special and unique manner and granted him with the power to perform certain miracles all in order to proof his Prophethood. Allah, the Exalted, saved the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, from being crucified and raised him to Himself. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine

there would be no need to do this as a divine being does not experience death. As Allah, the Exalted, treats His servants according to His will how can this extraordinary treatment of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, justify the conclusion that he is divine?

In addition, the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the same as all the Holy Prophets, including the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon them all.

Finally, the Holy Quran even established that after the ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, the religion of his disciples remained the same namely, Islam, which is now supported and further clarified by the Holy Quran. But over time the Christians abandoned the teachings of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and instead introduced innovations to the religion he brought. But Allah, the Exalted, sent his final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to correct things and realign humanity onto the straight path pointed out by the previous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This was clear to the people of the book as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been described in their divine scriptures yet they still rejected them out of greed for wealth and the social status they obtained by compromising on their faith. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

After discussing these issues with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Christian delegation from Najran still stubbornly rejected the truth. As a response to their stubbornness Allah, the Exalted, further refuted their belief by inviting them to a mutual gathering where both sides would invoke the curse of Allah, the Exalted, on the group which was lying. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned his family, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, his wife and the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Fatima, and their two sons, Hasan and Hussain, may Allah be pleased with them all. After witnessing this the Christian delegation refused to take part in this gathering as they full well knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was speaking the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if they had agreed to the mutual imprecation then fire would have rained down upon them. This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 3:61, Page 33. Another Hadith quoted by Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Pages 179-180, warns that if they all supplicated for the curse of Allah, the Exalted, on the liars then they would not have found their property or families when they returned home.

When they refused to take part in this mutual imprecation it became clear to all that the priests and leaders of Christianity in Najran, whose dedication to their faith was very well known, followed beliefs they themselves were not fully confident in.

The 10th Year After Migration

Be the Best

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen. Amongst them was a Companion, Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, who admitted that at the time he had ill feelings towards another Companion, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. After this expedition the spoils of war needed to be distributed and so the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, for this task. After this occurred Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and criticized Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, even though he did nothing wrong. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, if he disliked Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to which he replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then told him not to dislike him and to instead increase the love he had for him as he was worthy of it. After this comment Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, sincerely declared that he loved no one more than he loved Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 142-143.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are the best group ever created after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The fact they physically observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime is definitely one factor. But anyone who

knows about their life and their righteous deeds understands that their superiority is due to more than just this unique and great deed.

One of the main reasons for their superiority is shown in this event and in a Hadith involving the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, which is found in Sahih Muslim, number 6515. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once riding on his conveyance in the desert when he came across a Bedouin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted the Bedouin, placed his turban on the Bedouin's head and insisted that the Bedouin ride on his conveyance. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was told that the greeting he gave the Bedouin was more than enough as the Bedouin would have been greatly pleased at the fact that the great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted him. Yet, Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and showed the Bedouin great respect. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he only did this because the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that one of the best ways a person can honour their parent is by showing love and respect to their parent's relatives and friends. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, added that the Bedouin's father was a friend of his father the Commander of the Faithful, Umar Ibn Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him.

This incident indicates the superiority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They completely submitted to the teachings of Islam. They not only fulfilled the obligatory duties and avoided all sins but completely fulfilled all acts which were recommended to them to the highest possible degree. Their submission caused them to put aside their own desires and only act to please Allah, the Exalted. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily ignored the Bedouin as none of the actions he done were obligatory yet, unlike many Muslims

who would use this excuse, he completely submitted to the teachings of Islam and acted the way he did.

It is the lack of submission to the teachings of Islam which has weakened the faith of Muslims. Some only fulfil the obligatory duties and turn away from other righteous deeds, such as voluntary charity, which contradict their desires by claiming the actions are not obligatory. All Muslims desire to end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. But how is this possible if they do not follow their path or way? If a Muslim follows a path other than theirs then how can they end up with them? To end up with them one must follow their path. But this is only possible if one completely submits to the teachings of Islam like they did instead of cherry picking the deeds which suit their desires.

Harming the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. A Companion, Amr Bin Shas Al Aslami, may Allah be pleased with him, who was part of this expedition felt that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had treated him harshly. When Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to Medina he criticized Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, in various meetings and to different people he had spoken with. One day he entered the Mosque and found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who stared at him until he sat down next to him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then told Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, that he had harmed him. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, expressed his remorse at harming him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, finally commented that whoever harmed Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, harmed him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 143.

First of all it is important for Muslims to overlook the insignificant negative behaviour of others. All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many

Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.“

In addition, this incident highlights a sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, namely, to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of

loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

Being True

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. During this expedition Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, selected some camels as charitable donations for the needy. Some of his men asked if they could ride these camels thereby giving rest to their own camels. But he refused by stating that as they were selected for charitable donations only those entitled could make use of them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 144.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“…And do good as Allah has done good to you…”

Showing Trust

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, sent back a chunk of gold to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he divided amongst four people. Someone commented that they had more right to the gold than those men. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he questioned whether the people trusted him and added that he was trusted by the One who sends down to him news from Heaven, morning and evening. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 146.

A Muslim must show their trust in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by sincerely following and obeying him even if the wisdoms behind his traditions are not apparent to them. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one’s relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Judging Actions Positively

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, sent back a chunk of gold to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he divided amongst four people. Someone commented that they had more right to the gold than those men. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he questioned whether the people trusted him and added that he was trusted by the One who sends down to him news from Heaven, morning and evening. After this a man rudely told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fear Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rebuked him reminding him and others that he feared Allah, the Exalted, the most. The man then walked away. Khalid Bin Walid, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission to execute the man for his blasphemy but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him commenting that the man might be someone who offers the obligatory prayers. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that they were plenty of people who prayed yet were hypocrites as they declared things verbally which contradicted what was in their hearts. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then responded that he was not commanded to search the hearts of people nor to cut open their stomachs searching for their intention. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 146.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin…”

Be Just

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. He mentioned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that as he was young and lacked knowledge how would he correctly judge the cases that were brought to him in Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed his hand on Ali's chest, may Allah be pleased with him, and supplicated for Allah, the Exalted, to make his tongue firm and guide his heart. He then advised him that if two rivals came to him for judgement he should not make a judgement until he heard from both sides. He concluded that behaving in this manner would make things clear to him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 147.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They

must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themself harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.[1] So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just…”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be

neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

The Farewell Holy Pilgrimage

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 152.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world.

They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

True Sacrifice

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sacrificed a total of 100 camels for his Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sacrificed 63 (the number of his age) with his own hands and commanded Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to sacrifice the other 37. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 209 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 201.

The sacrifice is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, which Muslims imitate during the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) season. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was commanded to sacrifice his son the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 102:

"And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.""

The first lesson to understand is the importance of patience when facing tests and trials. A Muslim should always remember that those more beloved than them to Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were put through much more severe tests than them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one has been tested more for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, than him.

Muslims should also bear in mind that no matter what situation they find themselves in it is beneficial for them. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, that if a Muslim faces a difficulty and shows patience they will be rewarded for it. And if they face times of ease and show gratitude they will be rewarded for it. So according to this Hadith every situation a Muslim encounters is beneficial, even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Muslims should also understand that they will encounter a situation which has been decreed for them by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how they react to it. If they face it with patience they will find an uncountable reward in this world and in the next. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

But if they face it with impatience then they will face more difficulties. So either way they have to face the difficulty so they might as well gain benefit from it.

In addition, a Muslim should not be naïve and realize that this world is not Paradise. It is a world created in order to test mankind so it therefore can never be free of tests and trials. When a Muslim recognizes its innate nature facing difficulties and tests does not surprise them as they expect this from the world. The same way a person expects to get attacked if they find themself with a wild animal they should expect tests and trials in this world. Mentally preparing in this way will prevent a Muslim being caught off guard which is a cause of impatience.

Another lesson to learn from this great event is that the same way a person cannot gain things in this material world, such as wealth without sacrifice neither can a Muslim obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without sacrifice. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 2:

“Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried?”

Muslims should be grateful that Allah, the Exalted, does not require them to make big sacrifices like the ones made by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, and the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Nor is Allah, the Exalted, demanding Muslims to sacrifice in the way the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. They sacrificed their wealth, homes, families and lives. Instead, Allah, the Exalted, has entrusted Muslims with a few obligatory duties which require little sacrifice of their time, energy and wealth. If one ponders over the greatness of Paradise they will realise the sacrifices they have been encouraged to make are very small compared to the promised reward. Therefore, Muslims should show gratitude for this by submitting obediently to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The sacrifice of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, is an indication that a Muslim should always be ready to sacrifice their desires, love and wishes for the command of Allah, the Exalted. The ritual of sacrificing animals for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, Muslims perform annually stands for this. It is not simply a sacrifice of an animal but much more. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 37:

“Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you;…”

Muslims should adopt the piety mentioned in this verse all year round by placing the commands of Allah, the Exalted, before their desires. Only then will they be able to truly follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, correctly.

Another important lesson to learn from this great event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one’s control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

The 11th Year After Migration

The Final Illness of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Avoid the Desire to Lead

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was indirectly advised to ask the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who would lead the Muslims after him. He replied that he would not ask him about this nor would he ask to be appointed as the leader. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 326.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and social status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themself but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the

destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Devotion to Allah (SWT)

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. Before his illness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that no Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, would be taken by death until he saw his resting place in Paradise and had been asked to make a choice between life and death. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4428, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the poison he was given at Khaybar years earlier was causing him pain and felt he would die from it. This indicates that Allah, the Exalted, granted him the honor of martyrdom. During his final moments, he raised his sight to the sky and declared to the Highest Companion meaning, to Allah, the Exalted. He was 63 years old when he passed away. He was transferred to an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 343.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him

they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

It is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was transported by Allah, the Exalted, from this transient abode away into eternal ease in an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

"…it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station."

And chapter 93 Ad Duhaa, verses 4-5:

"And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied."

That was after he had completed his mission that Allah, the Exalted, entrusted him with. He had given advice to his nation and had directed them to the very best in both worlds. He had warned them and restrained

them from what would have harmed them here on Earth and in the Hereafter. Peace and blessings be upon him, the final Messenger of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Life After the Death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Speech of Abu Bakkar (RA)

Remaining Obedient

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. Due to their intense sadness each person reacted differently to the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, initially refused to believe it and claimed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had gone to visit Allah, the Exalted, and would return just like the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had an appointment with Allah, the Exalted, and as a result left his people for forty days.

When Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, arrived he addressed the people in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He recited chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 144:

“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all…”

And then said the following: “Allah, the Exalted, gave life to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and kept him alive until he had established the religion of Allah, the Exalted, made the orders of Allah, the Exalted, plain, delivered His message and fought in His cause. Thereafter Allah, the Exalted, took him to Himself and left you upon the path. And none shall perish except after clear signs and pain. Those whose Lord is Allah, the Exalted, should know that Allah, the Exalted, is alive and will never die. And those who worshipped the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should know that he has died. Fear Allah, the Exalted, people! Hold fast to your religion and put your trust in your Lord. The religion of Allah, the Exalted, is established. The word of Allah, the Exalted, is complete. Allah, the Exalted, will help those who support Him and who revere His religion. The Book of Allah, the Exalted, is amongst us. It is both the light and the cure. By it Allah, the Exalted, guided the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In it states what Allah, the Exalted, considers lawful and what is unlawful. We will not care who out of the creation descends upon us (to attack us). We will fight vigorously against those who oppose us just as we fought alongside the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.”

After Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, addressed the people, they all accepted the truth. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, felt dizzy and fell to the ground and finally accepted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had in fact died. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 348-349, and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 139-141.

The Caliphate of Abu Bakkar (RA)

Supporting the Truth

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. At this time the Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed to elect Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. This has been discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 3667 and 3668.

An important lesson to learn from this event is the importance of supporting others in matters of good. It is clear from this and other Hadiths that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to choose someone else as their Caliph. In fact, he even named Umar Ibn Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. This was the perfect opportunity for Umar Ibn Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, to take the important role as the first representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without any arguments or problems. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, chose to do the right thing and help the Muslim nation by appointing the best person for the role. He did not worry that if he supported someone else his rank and social status would be reduced or he would be forgotten. In fact, his honour and social status only grew after this right choice.

Unfortunately, many Muslims and even Islamic institutions do not behave in this manner. They often only support those they have a relationship with instead of helping anyone who does something good. They behave as if their social status will be reduced if they support others in good things. Some have fallen even lower and support their friends and relatives in bad things and fail to support strangers who are doing good. This is a major reason why the Islamic community has weakened over time. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number but always fulfilled their duty by supporting each other in matters of good without worrying about anything else. Muslims must change their attitude and follow in their footsteps if they desire strength and respect in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

In addition, even though it was clear Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was the preferred choice by even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet he did not nominate him explicitly. One of the reasons for this is that the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and nominating a new leader was a test from Allah, the Exalted. A test to see whether the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would argue and fight for leadership or submit sincerely to Allah, the Exalted, and nominate the best person for the role. As history clearly shows, they passed this test with flying colours. Therefore, it was a test for them, and a lesson for the future

Muslims to always strive to aid others in what is good. In addition, if he was appointed explicitly by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then some people in the future would have stated the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were never unanimously pleased with his appointment and they only accepted it because they were commanded to do so. Therefore, avoiding an explicit command allowed prevented this false belief as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were left to choose their leader under the implicit indications that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, should be the first Caliph of Islam. This further enhanced the right of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as Caliph, as he was implicitly indicated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and independently appointed by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Unity

After being unanimously appointed as the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, tried to resign as he had no desire for leadership. He publicly made this plea and it was Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who stepped forward and made it clear that no one desired his resignation nor would they accept his resignation. He reiterated how the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed him ahead of everyone else in all situations, such as leading the congregational prayers during the final illness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 682. All the Companions agreed with Ali and insisted Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, lead them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Page 212.

Years later, during his Caliphate, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would say that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was content with choosing Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead everyone in their religion (by leading them in the congregational prayers during the final illness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) and so all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were pleased with him to lead them in their worldly affairs also. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 5.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, behaved in this manner as they had been trained to become unified in matters of good by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must strive to adopt these teachings so that they too become unified in the things pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the

praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people

according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim

should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a

person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is

confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom’s worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim’s life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the

oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

A Sincere Advisor

During the Caliphates of Abu Bakkar, Umar Ibn Khattab and Uthman Ibn Affan, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, was considered a senior advisor to all of them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 216-217.

For example, at the beginning of the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, the Caliph decided to lead the war against the apostates himself. It was Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who urged him to remain in Medina and not join any expedition. He swore by Allah, the Exalted, that if the Muslims lost him, Islam would never prosper after that. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted his sincere advice.

When many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, initially advised against the plan of Abu Bakkar to fight the apostates (who refused to give the obligatory charity) Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him and commented that if he did not take the obligatory charity from them then he would not be following the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 217-218.

Similarly, during his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested that he should leave Medina with an expedition to fight the Persians but Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, warned him against this as this would put the stability of the Islamic nation in jeopardy. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 254-255.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Death of Abu Bakkar (RA) – the First Caliph

Supporting Others

During his final illness, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, publicly addressed the people of Medina, after consulting the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and informed them of his decision to appoint Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, as the next Caliph of Islam. They all declared that they would listen and obey Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Page 728.

According to one account, before naming Umar Ibn Khattab, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the people if they would be content with the person he chose. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, stood up and declared they would not be pleased unless it was Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 71.

As Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was a man of truth, he supported the truth where ever it lied.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

An Honest Eulogy

After Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away, Medina sank into sadness, similar to the sadness it faced during the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ali Ibn Abu Talib stood outside the home of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, and gave the following eulogy: “O Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with you. You were the closet Companion and friend of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. You were a comfort to him and the one he trusted the most. If he had a secret, he would tell it to you; and if he needed to consult someone regarding a matter, he would consult you. You were the first of your people to embrace Islam and you were the most sincere of them in faith. Your faith was stronger than any other person’s, as was the degree to which you feared Allah, the Exalted. And you were wealthier than anyone else in religious knowledge. You cared most for both the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam. Of all people, you were the best Companion to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him; you possessed the best qualities; you had the best past; you ranked highest; and you were closest to him. And of all people you resembled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the most in terms of his guidance and demeanor. Your ranking was higher than anyone else’s, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, honored you and held you in higher esteem than anyone else. On behalf of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam, may Allah reward you with the best of rewards. When the people disbelieved in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, you believed in him. Throughout his life, you were both his eyes with which he saw and his ears with which he heard. Allah, the Exalted, has named you truthful in His book when He said:

“And the one who has brought the truth [the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and [who] believed in it [Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him] - those are the righteous.” Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 33.

When people were stingy in their support for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, you comforted him. And when people sat still, you stood side-by-side with him, facing the same hardships that he faced. In times of hardship, you were truly a good and noble Companion of his. You were the second of the two, his Companion in the cave; and the one upon whom tranquility descended:

“If you do not aid him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] - Allāh has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Makkah] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] said to his companion [Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him], "Do not grieve; indeed Allāh is with us." And Allāh sent down His tranquility upon him and supported him with soldiers [i.e., angels] you did not see...” Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 40.

You were his Companion during the migration (to Medina) and you were his successor regarding the religion of Allah, the Exalted, and his nation. And a truly good successor you proved to be when the people apostatized. You did what no other Caliph of a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, did

before you. You stood up firmly and bravely when his other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lost their resolve and became soft. And when they became weak, you adhered to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. You truly were as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said: weak in your body, but strong regarding the commands of Allah, the Exalted; humble in yourself, but lofty in your ranking with Allah, the Exalted; well-esteemed in the eyes of people, honored and great in their hearts. Not a single one of them had any reason to dislike you, to be suspicious of you or hold you in contempt. You always treated the weak and humble as strong and honorable, making sure you gave them what was rightfully theirs. And in this regard, you treated relatives and strangers equally. Of all people, you respected those who were most obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and who feared Him, the most. In your overall character, you embodied truth and compassion. Your speech was always characterized by the qualities of wisdom and decisiveness. And you always struck a noble balance between gentleness and firmness. You always based your decision on knowledge and once you made your decisions, you always kept a firm resolve to execute them. Indeed, to Allah, the Exalted, we belong and to Him is our return. We are pleased with Him and submit to His decrees. And by Allah, the Exalted, other than the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have never been afflicted with a greater calamity than the calamity of your death. You were always a protector, a sanctuary, and a source of honour for this religion. May Allah, the Exalted, join you with the company of His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and may He not deprive us of your reward and may He not let us go astray after you.” After hearing his eulogy, the people responded by declaring that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had spoken the truth. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 736-738.

Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

A Consultant

During the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, was considered a senior advisor and dear friend. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the best of judges was Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would seek refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from a legal case or problem Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, could not handle. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 245-246.

On another occasion, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that women could no longer bear sons like Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and if it were not for Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, he would be doomed. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 248-249.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

“…So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…”

The Islamic Calendar

Once Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, received a document which only had the month written on it. Therefore, he could not work out the year the document referred to. He then gathered the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in order to create an Islamic calendar. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested that their calendar should start from when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 225-227.

This was another act of unity, which was administered by Umar and supported by Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, as the people of that time would judge time based on past events, some of which were connected to the pre-Islamic days of Ignorance. Introducing the Islamic calendar avoided this and instead unified the Muslims.

Muslims must take all the steps to create unity amongst them.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of

them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of

Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu

Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Noble Behaviour

Under the guidance of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the senior Companions, the Caliph, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, decided not to divide the newly-conquered lands amongst the soldiers. He initially faced some resistance from some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who then eventually agreed to his plan. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who agreed with him from the onset.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, instead allowed the non-Muslims to keep their lands and imposed on them a tax they could afford. The non-Muslims were pleased with his decision as it made them feel, for the first time in their lives, that they, and not the ruling class, were the owners of the agricultural land. Under the previous rulership, these non-Muslims were simply workers who cultivated the land and got virtually nothing back in return. All the income would be taken by the ruling class while they were left with pennies. The decision of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged these non-Muslims to ally themselves with the Muslims against foreign enemies and many of them accepted Islam after witnessing the justice and peace which spread across the land due to his Caliphate. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 466-467 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 251-252.

Generally speaking, it is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themself and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“…saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith…”

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themself by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themself in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

"And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself…"

Leading the People

During his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if the people appointed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, as Caliph after him, he would guide them on the path of truth, even if the people were reluctant. Even after he was stabbed, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told his son that if the people appointed Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, he would lead them on the straight path. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 252.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was a fine leader as he led by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising

others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themself and prohibited evil yet acted on it themself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themself then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

Being Trustworthy

Whenever the Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, departed from Medina he always appointed someone trustworthy in charge to manage its affairs until he returned. He appointed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge on more than one occasion. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 253.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

Keeping Blessings

The Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, once allocated some land in Yanbu to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them. He bought some additional land as well and had the land dug in search for water. A great amount of water gushed from those lands and Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, gave all of the land as an endowment to the poor and needy. He wrote the following in the document of endowment: “These are the instructions of Ali Ibn Abu Talib with regard to the disposal of his wealth: I give (the lands of) Yanbu, Wadi Al Qura, Al Adhniyah and Ra’ah in charity for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, to spend from it in every useful way for the sake of the Allah, the Exalted, at times of war and peace, on relatives close and distant. It is not to be sold or given away or inherited, whether I am alive or dead. I seek thereby the countenance of Allah, the Exalted, and the home of the hereafter. I seek nothing except that Allah, the Exalted, should accept it and inherit it, and He is the best of inheritors. That is my decision concerning it, a deal between me and Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 258-259.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person’s true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for Muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a Muslim does not use their blessings correctly they will become a burden for them in both worlds. And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or their inheritor will misuse the blessings which will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings as this is a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day.

Martyrdom of Caliph Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Electing Uthman Ibn Affan (RA) as Caliph

Rulership

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where he told his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to ensure his debts were paid off and told him to

ask the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, for permission to be buried in her house, next to his two Companions meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, which she agreed to. When he was urged to nominate the next Caliph, he advised them that the next Caliph would be appointed from the following six people, whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been pleased with before he died: Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Uthman Ibn Affan, Az Zubair Bin Awwam, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas and Abdur Rahman Bin Auf, may Allah be pleased with them. Umar, stressed that his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, would not be appointed Caliph but he could help choose the next one. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also appointed Shoaib Ar Rumi, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the congregational prayers until the next Caliph was appointed. He avoided selecting one of the six he choose to be the next Caliph from leading the prayers as this would have been a type of endorsement from Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to who the next Caliph should be. He did not desire to influence the selection in any way. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 398.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, avoided the tradition of kings by preventing his son from becoming the next Caliph, even though he was worthy of it. He only desired the best man for the job so selected the six who were best suited for the role of Caliph. This indicates the great sincerity Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had for the people.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one’s sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“…And do good as Allah has done good to you…”

A Fine Role Model

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, he was placed on his bed and the people surrounded him, supplicating for him. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed for him and commented that there was no one that he would love to meet Allah, the Exalted, with deeds like theirs more than Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3685.

This indicates the importance of choosing a good role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable Muslim and non-Muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why Muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins…”

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

Good Companionship

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, he was placed on his bed and the people surrounded him, supplicating for him. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed for him and commented that he always thought that Allah, the Exalted, would keep him with his two Companions, meaning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as he often heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioning himself, Abu Bakkar and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, together. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3685.

His good companionship in this world led to good companionship in the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

"Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."

Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

The Third Rightly-Guided Caliph

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, and based on his advice, the six he nominated: Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Uthman Ibn Affan, Az Zubair Bin Awwam, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas and Abdur Rahman Bin Auf, may Allah be pleased with them, held a meeting. Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, urged the others to reduce the candidates for rulership to three. Az Zubair gave up his right in favour of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them. Talha gave up his right in favour of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them. Sa'd gave up his right in favour of Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with them. Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, gave up his right and urged the remaining two, meaning Ali and Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, to give up their right in favour of their companion. Both of them remained silent and were thinking on what to do. Then Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission from them to consult others so that he could finally decide who should be the next Caliph. They both agreed to his suggestion. Eventually, Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, pledged allegiance to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and the first person after him to pledge allegiance was Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. After this the rest of the people pledged allegiance to him also. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

It is clear that each of them acted in complete sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and were not motivated by worldly reasons and that they were completely pleased with Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as the next Caliph.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themself and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Concentrating on More Relevant Issues

The nomination of Abu Bakkar, Umar Ibn Khattab and Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, as the first three Caliphs of Islam has always been a topic of much debate. Rightly guided scholars have often abundantly discussed the overwhelming evidence of their rights to be the first three Caliphs of Islam, in order to unite the two groups on the truth: the Sunnis and the Shi'a. Even though this is a worthy aim, none the less the average Muslim should not delve into these discussions or other similar discussions, such as the disagreements amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as these are issues Allah, the Exalted, will not ask them about on the Day of Judgement. These issues are between Allah, the Exalted, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 141:

"That is a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."

A Muslim must firmly believe that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were rightly guided and that Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with all of them. This has been proven by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 100:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājireen (migrants from Mecca) and the Anṣār (residents of Medina) and those who followed them with good conduct - Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”

As these issues will not be asked about on Judgement Day, a Muslim must instead concentrate on the things which will be asked about on Judgement Day. Only after a Muslim has fully understood and acted upon the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, do they have a right to address other issues. As virtually no one has reached this level, one must ensure they concentrate on the issues that are relevant, meaning, the issues which will determine whether they will go to Paradise or Hell.

Finally, it is foolishness to criticize the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and slander their pious personalities as they are the ones’ Allah, the Exalted, chose to carry forward the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, Allah, the Exalted, safeguarded these two sources of guidance through them. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

Therefore, if one criticizes them they are casting doubts on the authenticity of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is an extremely dangerous thing to do.

Finally, the one that dislikes any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, should be afraid of becoming a disbeliever, as disbelievers dislike the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, according to the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure. Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that He [i.e., Allāh] may enrage by them [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] the disbelievers…”

Gathering the Quran

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, the Battle of Yamaamah took place. This led to many Muslim casualties, many of which had memorized the Holy Quran, Umar Ibn Khattab encouraged Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, to gather the Holy Quran in book form out of fear that the verses might become lost if the memorizers of the Holy Quran continued to die or be martyred during battles. Prior to this the verses of the Holy Quran were not contained in a single book, instead they were either memorized or written on various different objects, such as rocks, which were in the possession of different people. Initially, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, showed some hesitation as he did not desire to do something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not do. He was very strict in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But when Umar persisted eventually, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, understood that this was the best course of action in order to secure the verses of the Holy Quran for the future generations. Abu Bakkar appointed Zaid Bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with them, for this momentous and difficult task. He worked tirelessly in order to gather the Holy Quran in book form. The copy remained with Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, until he died, then it was passed onto Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and eventually to his daughter and the mother of the believers Hafsah Bint Umar, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7191.

Up to the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, it was permissible for Muslims to recite the Holy Quran according to the different dialects it was revealed in. According to the Hadith found in Sahih

Bukhari, number 2419, it was revealed in seven different dialects. This allowed for flexibility in its recitation. But during the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Hudhayfah Ibn Yaman, may Allah be pleased with him, noticed the differences in the recitation of the Holy Quran by the soldiers who came from Syria and Iraq. He was afraid that these differences may cause disunity, especially amongst the ignorant Muslims, as they may object to the modes of recitation they were not familiar with. So he came to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and requested him to gather the Muslim nation on one mode of recitation. He agreed to this after consulting the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and none of them disagreed with his decision. He sent for the physical copy of the Holy Quran which was with the mother of the believers, Hafsah Bint Umar, may Allah be pleased with her; made copies of this version; and dispatched them all over the Islamic empire and commanded them to follow its mode of recitation, which was the mode of recitation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his tribe, the Quraysh. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4987.

When some misguided people criticized the actions of Uthman, Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, would defend him and warned people to only speak good about him. He reminded the people that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, only gathered the people on one mode of recitation after consulting all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And he would have done the same thing, if he was Caliph at that time. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 280-281.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took great steps to ensure the Holy Quran reached the following generations. Therefore,

Muslims must honor their efforts by sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran at all times.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

In addition, the actions of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates the importance of unity in Islam.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah,

the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar’s opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a

legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 2:

“…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in

contempt. The proud person sees themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not

for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Adopting Patience

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged he was offered support by many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who urged him to fight back and quash the rebels. The determination of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, only increased when Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned them that after he passed away turmoil would afflict them. When they questioned him about gaining safety he commented that they should find safety with the trustworthy one and his group and then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pointed to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, urged those who obeyed him to remain patient and not engage in fighting and spill the blood of the rebels or have their blood spilled for his sake. At one point there was over 700 sincere Muslims with Uthman, including the Companions, such as Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, all prepared to fight and defend him but he forbade them to.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission to fight against the rebels as he had done nothing wrong and insisted he had 500 sincere Muslims who would fight with him, yet Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade him from fighting as he did not want blood to be spilled on his account. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 287-288.

When the rebels prevented food and water from reaching Uthman, Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, took a huge risk to ensure water reached him and many sincere Muslims were wounded. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 288.

Al Mugheerah Ibn Shuhbah advised Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, to either fight and defend himself as he was in the right or flee to Mecca where he believed the rebels would not attack him there or to flee to Syria where the governor would protect him meaning, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, responded by saying that he was not going to be the first Muslim leader to shed the blood of Muslims. He feared that even if he fled to Mecca they would attack it. And he would never flee from the city of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Syria or any other place. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 547-551.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a Muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

In addition, it is important for Muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a Muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a Muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

"Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed…"

Finally, in life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties then when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Martyrdom of Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

The Caliph's Sacrifice

When the Pilgrimage season ended many of the pilgrims began marching to Medina in order to protect the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and many soldiers were also dispatched by the governors of the different Islamic regions with the same purpose. The leaders of the rebels heard of this and realized they needed to act soon otherwise they would be overcome by opposition. On the day of his martyrdom, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was fasting and fell asleep. He saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, in his dream. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to break his fast with them. After waking up, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that he was going to die that day. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, knew he was going to be a martyr and so he became further resolved in not allowing anyone to defend him, as it would only cause bloodshed and disunity without saving his life. He urged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the sincere Muslims who had been stationed at his house not to fight when some violence broke out. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, convinced the sincere Muslims to leave eventually, a few rebels managed to enter the home of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and attacked him while he was reciting the Holy Quran. His wife attempted to help him and she was also wounded in the encounter. She even shouted at them that they desired to kill a man who would stay up all night and recite the entire Holy Quran in a single cycle of prayer. But this did not deter the evil doers. They martyred the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased

with him, and his blood spilled on the following verse of the Holy Quran, chapter 2, verse 137:

“So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allāh will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”

After martyring Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, they ransacked his home and even the public treasury, though there was virtually nothing in it as Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, would swiftly spend it on the needy.

This event took place in the 35th year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, when Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was 82 years old.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were deeply grieved by his martyrdom and showed their frustration verbally, such as Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with him, who first recited the following verse and then supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, to seize the troublemakers. And his supplication was accepted and all of the leaders of the rebels were eventually killed. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-106:

“Say, "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become worthless; and We will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight [i.e., importance]. That is their recompense - Hell - for what they denied and [because] they took My signs and My messengers in ridicule.”

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was extremely grieved and angry. He was so angry that he slapped his son Hasan and struck his other son Husayn, may Allah be pleased with them, as he stationed them at the Caliph’s door. He harshly criticized the others that were stationed at the Caliph’s door as well. He cursed the rebels and declared his innocence in the Caliph’s murder. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 288.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, even quoted the following verses when describing the rebels who killed Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verses 16-17:

“[They are] like the example of Satan when he says to man, "Disbelieve." But when he disbelieves, he says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allāh, Lord of the worlds." So the outcome for both of them is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 571-580.

The Caliphate of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

Further Turmoil

The martyrdom of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, caused a great deal of further seditions and turmoil. Because of this event the Muslim nation became divided and has remained so until today. Hatred was created against one another and many calamities followed. The evil doers prevailed and the righteous were subdued. The evil doers became more active and caused further problems and the righteous were unable to spread the good to overcome it. All the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, swore allegiance to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who reluctantly accepted, as he feared further disunity, and he was the most entitled to becoming the next Caliph at that point and was the best of those who remained, but people were divided as the fire of seditions had been lit. Unity broke down and there was no discipline left and the new Caliph and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not able to achieve all they wanted of spreading goodness and justice.

The two spiritual diseases that manifested in the rebels began to spread to the rest of the nation: the trial of doubts and the trial of desires. The trial of doubts is caused by ignorance of Islamic teachings that leads to weakness of faith. When one possesses weakness of faith then deviating from the truth becomes easy. They are easily misled into believing incorrect interpretations of the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon. This can even lead one to harm

innocent people in the name of Islam. In addition, this encourages one to adopt wishful thinking instead of hope in Allah, the Exalted. Wishful thinking consists of intentionally persisting in disobeying Allah, the Exalted, yet believing He will forgive.

The trial of desires involves preferring the material world over preparing for the hereafter. Their desires urge them to gain, enjoy and hoard worldly blessings and ignore the hereafter. If the desires are strong enough, they can urge one to the unlawful and even harming others for the sake of worldly things such as wealth and authority. Desires encourages one to cherry pick the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby one obeys and ignores according to their whims and fancies. This person even misinterprets divine teachings in order to justify fulfilling their desires. Ignoring the hereafter prevents one from remembering their accountability and when this occurs then any action becomes possible.

The cure for both trials of doubts and desires is sincerely learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one obtains certainty of faith. This acts as a shield against the consequences of doubts and desires.

Even though the turmoil within the Islamic nation spread rapidly, none the less, it did not prevent the Caliph, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. But those who remained firm on misguidance and causing corruption did not escape the consequences of

their treachery in this world and they will certainly be paid in full in the hereafter and so will those who follow in their footsteps. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 227:

"…And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the Muslim nation. Therefore, Muslims should not get distracted by them and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Craving for Leadership

After the martyrdom of Uthman Ibn Affan, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, willingly pledged allegiance to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. He initially refused and advised them to choose someone else and promised his obedience to that person. He even offered his allegiance to Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who refused and instead insisted that he undertake the role of Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 315-316.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was undoubtedly the most deserving of the Caliphate, as he was the first of the remaining Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to become Muslim, the most knowledgeable, the closest to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in lineage, the most courageous, the dearest to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the best in caliber, the most superior, the highest in status and the one who most resembled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in attitude and character. Therefore, he was best suited for the Caliphate than anyone else. A fact all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, testified too. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 318.

Even Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, the governor of Syria at that time, did not refute the Caliphate of Ali, may Allah

be pleased with him. He commented that he knew that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was better than him and had more of a right to the Caliphate than him. His issue with Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was based on seeking retribution against the killers of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, not challenging his role as Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 325-327.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, did not desire leadership as he feared the tests that are associated with it.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themself but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the

destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Enacting Justice

The day after the martyrdom of Utham Ibn Affan, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the sincere Muslims pledged allegiance to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, addressed the people and told them that he was reluctant to accept being the next Caliph but the people insisted that he should accept it. He made it clear that he had no authority without their support and the keys of their wealth were now with him. He added that he had no right to keep even a single silver coil to himself in exclusion to the people. He even offered them the chance to change their minds from electing him as the next Caliph but they refused. They all then pledged allegiance to him. He then reminded them that their duty was to obey him and he was obliged to follow the right path and be upright and just. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 328.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themself harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.[1] So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just…”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Mutual Love

Even though many ignorant people have attempted to create wedges between Abu Bakkar, Umar Ibn Khattab, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is clear from their interactions and conduct towards one another that there was nothing but love and respect between them. Any ill-feelings between them would only indicate selfishness and greed – negative characteristics they were all free from. For example, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, once declared that he preferred doing good towards the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, than doing good to his own relatives. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4036.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give priority to those who were closer and more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and those who sacrificed more for the sake of Islam, in matters which did not contradict justice. For example, he once allocated Usamah Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, more wealth from the public treasury than his own son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. When his son questioned this he replied that Usamah's father, Zayd Bin Haritha, may Allah be pleased with them, was more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then his father (meaning, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him) and Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, was more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, than him (meaning, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him). This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 248-249.

On another occasion, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, invited the son of Ali and the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Husayn Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, to spend time with him. When he arrived at his home, he observed how Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not given permission to see Umar who was with Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, and so he turned back without seeking permission to enter upon Umar, may Allah be please with him. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, eventually found out what occurred he told Husayn Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that he had more of a right to enter upon him then his own son Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. He then commented that the blessings the people were granted was granted by Allah, the Exalted, because of the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 256.

Even when Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, decided on how much regular wealth would be given to the people from the public treasury, he allocated the people according to their relationship with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though he was advised to begin with himself and his own family. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 257.

The family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, loved and respected all the Companions, including Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, even gave his daughter, Umm Kulthoom, may Allah be pleased with her, the granddaughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in marriage to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, even named his children after the first three Caliphs: Abu Bakkar, Umar and Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them. Would any sane person behave in this manner with someone they did not like or get on with? This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 258.

Umar once kissed the head of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, and supplicated that may Allah, the Exalted, not keep him in a land where Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was absent.

During the Caliphate of Uthman, Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, was considered a senior advisor and dear friend. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 216-217.

During his Caliphate, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would often wear a specific cloak. When questioned about it he replied that his brother and dear friend Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, gave it to him. He added that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was sincere to Allah, the Exalted, and Allah, the Exalted, reward him, then

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, wept. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 258.

Finally, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded him to be the first Caliph then he would not have allowed Abu Bakkar or Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, to stand on the pulpit of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He would have fought them, even if he had nothing to fight them with except his cloak, as he would never fail to follow the orders of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, confirmed that all the Caliphs before him were chosen based on mutual consultation amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and they were all pleased with their nominations as Caliphs. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 215.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such

as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim’s feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

A Beautiful Sermon – 1

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 334-335.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, sent down a book of guidance in which He explained good and evil. Therefore, the people must do what is good and stay away from what is evil.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people to fulfill the obligatory duties for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A Muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or

enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all Muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people to fulfill the obligatory duties for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that He guides them to Paradise.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

This Muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a Muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the

one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has established sacred limits that are not unknown.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for Muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step

closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a Muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has made the sanctity of a Muslim more sacred than all other sacred limits.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a Muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches Muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough.

A true believer and Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A Muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner.

The honor of a Muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A Muslim should instead defend the honor of others whether in their presence or absence as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themself they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has brought the Muslims together on the basis of devotion and His Oneness.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themself and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that the Muslim is the one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe, except when there is a legitimate reason. It is not lawful to harm a Muslim except when there is a legitimate reason.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will

be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner’s permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one’s belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that they must pay attention to the interests of the general public.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a Muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you…”

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that the Final Hour is behind them and will soon catch them up.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themself. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that they must show little interest in this material world so that they join the righteous people.

This is achieved when one adopts the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the

hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised the people that if they observed something good, they should go ahead and do it but if they observed something evil, then they must leave it.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Honesty and Humility

Muhammad Ibn Al Hanafiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, once asked his father, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who the best people were after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ali named Abu Bakkar Siddique and then Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. When his son interjected and asked if he (meaning, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him) was the best after Umar, Ali may Allah be pleased with them, replied that he was just a man from amongst the Muslims. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4629.

On another occasion, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that if anyone claimed he was better than Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, he would subject them to the legal punishment of slander. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 219.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was free of pride and therefore had no issues with speaking the truth in this matter. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily…"

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themself if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari’s, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly…”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Adhere to True Guidance

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would urge the people to follow the two sources of guidance namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, he once commented that the people must follow the guidance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him (which includes following the Holy Quran), for it is the best of guidance and they must follow his traditions for it is the best of ways.

He once commented that he would not forsake the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the opinion of anyone.

On another occasion, he declared that he was not a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, and he did not receive divine revelation but he only acted in accordance with the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as much as he could.

During a sermon he once urged the people to adhere to the religion and to follow the guidance and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He added, that they should try to find the answer to whatever they did not understand in the Holy Quran and

whatever it approved of, they must accept and whatever it disapproved of, they must reject.

In another sermon he told the people that newly invented matters are the worse of matters. And the one who innovates is misled and no innovator introduces an innovation but they have forsaken the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 115-117 & 119-120.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If Muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered a righteous deed it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. Because the fact is that the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources even if it is a righteous deed the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many Muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins they have preoccupied Muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads

to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a Muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Verifying Information

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, took great steps in ensuring people sought Islamic knowledge and acted upon it. A branch of this was to ensure that the knowledge gained was correct and accurate. In order to teach this important principle to people he would ask the one who claimed they heard or saw something from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to swear an oath that they were telling the truth. He did not behave in this manner as he doubted the honesty of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, rather, he did this in order to highlight to others and the coming generations the importance of ensuring the knowledge they learned and acted upon was correct and accurate. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 117.

From this one should learn the important principle of verifying information before acting upon it or sharing it with others.

One can imagine how difficult the spreading of unauthentic news is to control especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for Muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many Muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting Muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between Muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A Muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others,

whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent Muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

Defining Asceticism

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once recited the following verse and commented that whoever does not grieve over the past, nor (overly) rejoice over what has been given to them has become an ascetic in the complete sense of the word. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

"In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…"

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 111-112.

The one who avoids behaving in this manner does so as their spiritual heart is not attached to the material world, and this is asceticism.

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a Muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a Muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themself in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a Muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A Muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it passes them by. The mind of this pious Muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

Abstinence consists of several different levels. Some Muslims abstain in order to free their hearts of every vain and useless occupation so that they can fully concentrate on obeying Allah, the Exalted, and fulfil their responsibilities towards people. According to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 257, the one who behaves in such a manner will find that Allah, the Exalted, will suffice them by taking care of their worldly issues. But the one who is only concerned with worldly things will be left to their devices and will find nothing but destruction. This is why it is been said that the one who pursues the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, will find that the minimal effect it has on them is that it distracts

them from the remembrance and obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is still true even if a person commits no sins in their pursuit of the excess aspects of the material world.

Some abstain from the world in order to lighten their accountability on the Day of Judgement. The more one possesses the more they will be held accountable. In fact, whoever has their deeds scrutinised by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day will be punished. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536. The lighter one's accountability the less likely this will occur. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, that those who possess plenty in the world will possess very little good on the Day of Rising except for those who dedicated their belongings and wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, but these are a few in number. This long accountability is the reason why each person, rich or poor, will wish on the Day of Judgement that they were only given their daily provision during their lives on Earth. This has been confirmed in Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4140.

Some Muslims abstain from the excess of this material world out of desire for Paradise which will make up for losing out on the pleasures of this material world.

Some abstain from the excess of the material world out of fear of Hell. They rightfully believe that the more one indulges in the excess of this material world the closer they are to the unlawful, which leads to Hell. This has been

warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. In fact, it is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4215, that a Muslim will not become pious until they abstain from something which is not a sin out of fear it may lead to a sin.

The highest degree of abstinence is to understand and act on what Allah, the Exalted, desires from His servants which has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Namely, to abstain from the excess of the material world out of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, knowing that their Lord does not like the material world. Allah, the Exalted, has condemned the excess of this material world and has belittled its worth. These pious servants were embarrassed that their Lord should see them inclining towards something which He dislikes. These are the greatest servants as they only act according to the wishes of their Lord even when they are given an opportunity to enjoy the lawful luxuries of this world. This is the very reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose poverty even though he was offered the treasuries of the Earth. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6590. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose this as he knew it was what Allah, the Exalted, desired for His servants. As Allah, the Exalted, disliked the material world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, rejected it out of love for His Lord. How can a true servant love and indulge in what their Lord dislikes?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did set an example for the poor by choosing poverty and taught the rich how to live through his words and actions. He could have easily chosen the alternative

and practically showed the rich how to live by taking the treasuries of the world which were offered to him and he could have taught the poor how to live correctly through his words and actions. But he chose poverty for a specific reason which was out of servanthood to his Lord, Allah, the Exalted. This abstinence was adopted by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, the first rightly guided Caliph of Islam Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, once cried when water sweetened with honey was given to him. He explained that he once observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pushing away an invisible object. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told him the material world had come to him and he commanded it to leave him alone. The material world replied that he had escaped the material world but those after him would not. Because of this Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, wept when seeing the water sweetened with honey believing the material world had come to misguide him. This incident is recorded in Imam Ashfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 47.

In reality, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, never ate or dressed to gain pleasure but only took what they needed from the material world while focusing on preparing for the hereafter. They disliked when the material world was placed at their feet being fearful that perhaps their reward had been given to them in this world instead of in the hereafter.

Anyone who is truly abstinent will follow in their footsteps. Muslims should not fool themselves by indulging in the unnecessary luxuries of this material world while claiming their heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted. If a person's heart is purified it manifests on their limbs and in their actions which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094.

Whoever's heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted, follows in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by taking what they need from the material world, spending only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and turning away from the excess of the material world while striving to prepare for the hereafter. This is true abstinence.

Loving the Prophet (PBUH)

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once expressed his and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by commenting that he was dearer to them than their wealth, children, fathers, mothers and cold water when one is thirsty. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 123.

It has been made clear in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is an important part of faith. In fact, one Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 165, advises that a person will only taste the sweetness of faith when they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 168, clearly warns that a person cannot be a believer until they love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. Because of this fact Muslims all claim they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But this is a claim which must be supported by evidence. Otherwise, it will have no value with Allah, the Exalted.

A sign of love has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. It clearly advises that if one loves Allah, the Exalted, and desires His love and forgiveness they

must practically follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Mohammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.""

This means a Muslim must strive to emulate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by applying his traditions into their lives through following his words and deeds. They must obey his commands and avoid his prohibitions. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

“…And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from…”

One must not pick and choose from his traditions and only apply them in their behaviour when it suits them. The one who does this is only following their desires while claiming to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One clear sign of this incorrect attitude is that a person changes the priority of actions set by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, they will give priority to the actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which are less important than his other actions. For example, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5363,

while at home the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, would help his family with the house chores but when the time of prayer came he would leave to lead the congregational prayer at the Mosque. If someone helps their family with the chores of the house but does not attend the Mosque to offer the prayer with the congregation without a valid excuse then they are not following the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is because they have reordered the priority of actions. The prayer at the Mosque with congregation takes priority over helping with house chores according to the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And if a person reorders this priority they are not following his tradition. Helping one's family with the house chores is undoubtedly a good deed but if they behave in this manner they are not following the tradition of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, even if it appears so. They are in fact only following their own desires. This is an important point Muslims must understand. But it is vital to note, this does not mean Muslims should stop doing righteous deeds. It means they should try their best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly.

The Path to Paradise

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would always encourage people to gain Islamic knowledge. He once commented that no one should feel too shy to learn if they do not know something.

On another occasion he advised people to acquire knowledge and as a result they would become known for it and that they should act upon it so that they become people of knowledge.

He once warned that the true bearer of knowledge is the one who acts upon what they learn and whose actions are in accordance with their knowledge.

On another occasion he warned that knowledge calls out to action to join it. If action responds (then good) otherwise, knowledge departs.

He encouraged people to discuss the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they visited others.

He encouraged people to learn knowledge which was useful. He once commented that knowledge is more than can be learned, so one should take from each branch of knowledge what is best.

When Ali, was martyred, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, commented that Islamic jurisprudence and knowledge had been lost with his death. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 344-347.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

Advice to a Governor

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised one of his governors of Egypt with the following, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 564-565.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him that if he had two matters to deal with, one which has to do with the hereafter and the other one which has to do with this material world, then he should start with that which has to do with the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly

rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that he should have a strong desire to do good and he should always adopt the correct intention, for Allah, the Exalted, gives to a person according to their intention.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A Muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their

duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all Muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that he should not anger his Lord in order to please His creation.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that he should be harsh with the wrongdoer and be gentle with the righteous.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim’s faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury…”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themself through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that he should bring the righteous close to himself and make them his inner circle and brothers.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a Muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Balanced Mental State

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, once wrote a letter to Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, and advised him that a man would feel upset to miss out on what he was never meant to have. And he is pleased to get what he never could have missed. Therefore, a person should be pleased with what they achieve in respect to the hereafter and let their regret be with regard to what they miss of that. One should not exult over the worldly things they obtain nor should they grieve over the worldly things they miss out on. They should be more concerned about what happens after death. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 580.

One thing which can help a person to avoid stress is by adopting a balanced state of mind. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themself to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23, of the Holy Quran:

"In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…"

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not

swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A Muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

A balanced state of mind is always best which prevents the negative effects of extreme moods. This will take a Muslim closer to true peace of mind and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

True Muslim & Believer

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would urge all his employees to not wrong anyone, especially, those under the care and protection of the Islamic nation. For example, he once wrote a letter to his employees and advised them that they were keepers of the people's treasury. Therefore, they should not prevent anyone from meeting their needs, and from seeking what they want. When they collect the land tax, they must not force people to sell their winter or summer garments, any mount they need for their work or any servant. They must not whip anyone for the sake of wealth and not wrongfully touch the wealth of anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 603.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner’s permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one’s belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

Helping Others

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised one of his governors to take as a companion the one who can utter the word of bitter truth to them and is the least helpful to them with regard to the things that Allah, the Exalted, disapproves of, regardless of whether that pleases the governor or not. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 605.

This indicates the importance of having companions that are honest and sincere.

Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to

others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion's life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Fulfilling Trusts

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, always fulfilled the peace treaties he concluded with others and urged his governors to do the same. He once advised them that if they reached a peace deal with their enemy and made a covenant with them, then they must fulfill the terms of the deal. They must be honest and sincere and adhere to the deal regardless of the cost, as there is nothing among the obligations of Allah, the Exalted, that all people are agreed upon to venerate despite the difference in their views and inclinations, that is more important than the fulfilment of covenants. So they should never betray their covenants and never betray their enemy, for no one has the audacity to challenge Allah, the Exalted, as the treaties are made in His blessed name, except the one who is ignorant and doomed. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 608-609.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

Monitoring Others

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would appoint the most trustworthy, reliable and able people to positions of leadership. But he would not give them free reign. He would constantly observe them through other employees.

Ali, may Allah pleased with him, had many inspectors whose duty was to oversee the governors and interact with the locals to ensure the governors were fulfilling their duties. They, in turn, had many aids to ensure their duty was fulfilled to the highest of standards.

He would send spies to the various cities in order to gather intelligence about his governors and the affairs of the people. He would command his governors to do the same, thereby ensuring the employees of the governors would remain sincere out of fear.

He would request regular reports from his governors on the affairs of the people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 468 & 613.

From his behaviour, one can understand that he took fulfilling the rights of those under his care very seriously.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others

especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Making Things Easy

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would strive hard to make things easy for the people under his care and urged his governors to do the same. For example, he once advised his governors that there is nothing a leader can do to make the people under them think more positively about them better than treating them kindly, reducing the burden on them, and refraining from forcing them into something that is beyond them. Behaving in this manner would create an atmosphere of mutual trust and positive thinking and this would prevent a lot of trouble. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 617.

In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themself and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it

means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themself if they possess the means to do so without troubling themself, especially if they child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, to Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

Disagreement Amongst the Companions (RA)

Correcting Disputes

After the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan, was martyred, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah and Az Zubair Bin Awwam, may Allah be pleased with them, set out for Mecca where they met the mother of the believers Aisha Bint Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with her. They discussed heading out in pursuit of the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, in order to seek legal retribution and justice for him. It was obvious all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, blamed themselves for the Caliph's death as they felt they should have protected him. Therefore, they were eager to enact justice against his killers. Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with him, believed if his killing was not legally avenged then this would make future rebels bolder in opposing the authority and they may well be encouraged to kill the leaders they disliked. They were supported by many Muslims who were loyal to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, such as his relatives who had left Medina and headed for Mecca, and the governor of Basra, who was in Mecca also. Others who left their cities in order to aid Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also reached Mecca and offered their support. They all left Mecca and headed for Basra, which was one of the main cities of the rebels. They only desired to carry out legal retribution according to Islamic law against the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and inform the people of what had occurred as most of the facts had been twisted out of context by the rebels and they had fabricated many lies in order to create disunity amongst the Muslims. They aimed to invite people to join their cause until they could seize the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, with minimal conflict and damage to the Islamic empire and set things straight.

It is important to note that Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, did not contradict the following verse, as she left her home for the sake of doing something good. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, even quoted the following verse in order to make her reason for joining the expedition clear. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

And one must bear in mind she did leave her home in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage when Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was martyred, a journey away from her home in Medina, which no one objected to. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 33:

“And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance…”

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, was encouraged to accompany the expedition as the Muslims believed that her presence would prevent

fighting and encourage the Muslims to reconcile and set things straight quickly, as she was the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One must bear in mind attacking and killing the Caliph is a direct attack against Islam, as the Caliph is the representative of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Earth. Therefore, this could not be overlooked or ignored.

Once reaching Basra, many Muslims joined their cause and others did not. Those who did not were afraid of any conflict which could occur between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and therefore abstained from choosing sides and fighting against any Companion, may Allah be pleased with them. In addition, those who did not join them believed only the Caliph, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had the right to organize an expedition to seek legal retribution for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and they therefore did not desire to do something serious without his permission.

Some of the leaders of the troublemakers, such as Hukaym Ibn Jablah, brought some people with him and attacked Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, and those with them. These Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, commanded their followers not to attack and only defend themselves. They realized that these troublemakers were only looking to cause further discord. They made it clear that they were only seeking justice against the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and did not desire to fight anyone else. These thugs tried to kill

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, but Allah, the Exalted, protected her. Many of those responsible for the killing of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, were killed.

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, wrote letters to the other cities in order to inform people of what actually occurred in Basra and urged the people to continue finding and taking legal retribution against the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as she truly believed justice, peace and unity could not spread once again throughout the Islamic lands until this was done. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 38-59.

The Caliph's Migration

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was in Medina, desired to head towards Syria to discuss matters with Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, the governor of Syria. He was also considering moving to Iraq so that he could be closer to the turmoil with the hope he could control it directly. But he was advised by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to remain in Medina and only leave in extreme circumstances. After some time passed he returned to his original opinion and decided to head for Kufa. He was then informed that Aisha, Talha, Az Zubair, and others, may Allah be pleased with them, were heading to Basra. Many of the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, were still psychologically affected by the murder of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and out of fear of further disunity and turmoil decided to remain in Medina and did not join Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Many of these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even refused to leave their homes out of fear of being involved in something they could not justify to Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

When his son Hasan Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him not to leave Medina, he replied that if he did not pay attention to his duties, who would fulfill them on his behalf?

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to the people of Kufa encouraging them to join him on his expedition but many of them chose to

obey their governor, Abu Musa Al Ash'ari, may Allah be pleased with him, who warned them not to get involved and fight during this time of turmoil. But after Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, was dismissed as governor, some other Companions, including Ammar Bin Yasir, Hasan Ibn Ali, and Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, encouraged the people to join Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, their leader and Caliph, so that he could restore order in the Islamic empire. As a result many people from Kufa joined him.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, made it crystal clear to his army when they marched towards Basra in order to confront the army of Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, that his only goal was to deal with them on the basis of kindness and to avoid confrontation as much as possible, hoping they would deter from their plan and let him, the Caliph, deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him.

On another occasion, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, told those with him that he only wanted to set things straight with Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them. If they did not respond to him then he would leave them alone and acknowledge their right to adopt a difference of opinion from him and he would be patient on that. He would leave them alone as long as they left him alone and he would only fight to defend himself.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, acknowledged to those with him that Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, were not wrong for seeking justice for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, but

they should have been patient in the matter, as that was in the people's best interests. He hoped no fighting would take place between them but if it did, he hoped Allah, the Exalted, would forgive those who were sincere to Him in this matter. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 56-66

It seems as though Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, saw that the intention of Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, was good, as they were seeking justice, but they method was incorrect as he was the authority and therefore seeking justice should have been left to him, instead of organizing an unauthorized army to deal with the killers themselves. He wanted them to respect the chain of command and the implementation of justice through the authority, which is the correct method. If everyone attempts to enact justice without the proper authorization, like vigilantes, then that would only lead to further seditions and disunity within society. The troublemakers would use this as an excuse to incite further trouble against the authority in places which were already unsettled, places which only needed a nudge to cause an all-out civil war. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, desired to settle the disturbance caused by the killing of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, which affected every city within the Islamic empire before bringing his killers to justice. Dealing with an unstable empire is liking dealing with a house of cards, the slightest disturbance can cause all of it to fall down. This is something Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, understood.

Reconciliation

Before the two sides met, meaning, the army of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and the army of Aisha Bint Abu Bakkar, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah and Az Zubair Bin Awwam, may Allah be pleased with them, many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and Followers, may Allah have mercy on them, contacted both sides in order to deter them from any type of confrontation as they feared it might result in a battle. Imran Ibn Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, urged both sides not to fight and took an oath on Allah, the Exalted, that he would never like to fire a single arrow at any of the two sides out of fear of the consequences. Ka'b Ibn Soor, may Allah have mercy on him, tried so hard to prevent a confrontation between the two sides that he was killed while standing between the two armies calling them to lay down their weapons.

Before any fighting took place, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched Al Qa'qa Ibn Amr, may Allah have mercy on him, in order to encourage Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, to reconcile with him and allow him to deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. Al Qa'qa, may Allah have mercy on him, reminded them that as the leaders of the troublemakers had many ignorant followers who were prepared to fight for them, attacking these leaders at this stage would only lead to further bloodshed and disunity. It would give the rebels another excuse to rise up against the authority. He explained that this was the reason why Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, did not apprehend and execute the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, immediately. He desired to wait until he could restore peace and justice within the different Islamic cities first and unity was established once again, then deal with the killers according to the Holy Quran, meaning,

legal retribution. He urged them to obey Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and pledge allegiance to him so that it increases the stability of the Muslim nation. Whereas, opposing him would only cause instability and further turmoil. This would only fuel the rebels and their evil plans to cause further problems within the Islamic nation. Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with his suggestion and declared that if Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, came to them with the same points they would reconcile with him.

After this Ali, met with Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, and they all spoke and agreed about making a peace deal and allowing Ali to deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 66-69

Generally speaking, this is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

"No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin…conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward."

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way

instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

The Battle of the Camel

Evil Plans

After Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, made a peace agreement with Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, he announced that he would be departing from Basra the next day and commanded that no one who had been involved in the besieging and murder of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, should accompany him. Many of these troublemakers joined the army of Ali and some joined the army of Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them. Their aim was only to gain some protection for themselves. These troublemakers and rebels consisted of those who were not known to be troublemakers by others, those who were known but gained protection from their tribes, those whom there was no evidence about their role in the killing of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and those who were hypocrites but did not show their hypocrisy clearly.

The rebels, headed by Abdullah Ibn Saba, understood that a peace treaty between the two groups would signal an end to them and their evil ways. So they hatched a scheme to initiate fighting early in the next day. They understood that if a fight broke out, then in the chaos and confusion both sides would believe the other side had betrayed them and this would lead to further fighting, bloodshed and disunity. This would distract the Muslims from them, at least for some time.

When the fighting was initiated by the rebels, Ali, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, did not declare all out war on each other. Instead, they tried to end the fighting and control their own sides as much as possible. Each leader commanded their soldiers to only defend themselves and not attack the other side. But one can imagine how difficult this would be in a battle between two huge armies at a time there was no communication devices between the commanders and their soldiers.

After attempting to defend his soldiers and prevent further fighting, Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with him, retreated from the battlefield hoping his soldiers would also retreat after seeing him do so, thereby ending the battle. He understood his plan of setting things straight by bringing the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had taken a dangerous turn and he did not desire to shed the blood of innocent Muslims. There are reports that when he was warned not to fight against his first cousin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, he withdrew. Also, he was aware of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Muslim, number 7322, which states that Ammar Ibn Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, would be killed by a group that was in the wrong. As Az Zubair became aware that Ammar, was in the army of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, he was encouraged further to retreat and not take part in the fighting. He was later pursued by some rebels and martyred. When Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed of his death, he commented that the one who killed him should receive the glad tidings of Hell. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 127.

Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, was hit by a stray arrow in his leg while he was trying to command the soldiers to stop fighting. The arrow re-opened an old wound he suffered in Uhud, while defending the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with his body. As a result he was carried off the battlefield and died shortly after.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was so distraught when he observed the many Muslims being killed that he told his son, Hasan Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that he wished that he had died years before and never witnessed such an awful day.

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, moved towards the battlefield on her camel, hoping that her presence there would force the two sides to stop fighting, as a true Muslim would fear harming her. But the evil rebels were not deterred by this and continued fighting, even though they were being commanded to stop. They purposely targeted Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, knowing her killing would ignite a fire within the Islamic nation that would perhaps never be extinguished. But her followers fought bravely to protect her.

Ali, understood that as long as Aisha, may Allah be pleased with them, was in the battlefield the fighting would continue and as she was in real danger he commanded for her to be brought out from the battlefield. Her howdah, which she was sitting inside was brought to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and he commanded her to be taken to safety. When she left the battlefield, her followers also retreated from the battlefield, which ended the fighting.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded his army not to harm an injured soldier, not to pursue anyone who fled and not to take any war booty except their weapons that had been brought to their camp. He told the opposing army that if they found their property with any of his men, they could take it back. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 70-84.

The rebels hatched another evil plan. But a person should take heed that evil plans only affect the planner, even if this is not obvious to people.

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

"And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting…"

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

"…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?..."

Brothers

After the Battle of the Camel was over, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed for the mercy and forgiveness of all the Muslims who had been killed on both sides. He commented that he hoped that he and those who differed from him would be from those Allah, the Exalted, spoke about in chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 47:

"And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other."

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 87-88.

Generally speaking, during a person's youth due to a lack of responsibilities and sharing a common daily schedule, such as attending the same school, people form strong and close bonds with others, such as siblings or friends. But with the passing of time as the responsibilities of people increase and differ and due to changes in their daily schedule people adopt different characteristics. This causes the bonds between them to weaken and in some cases they become quite distant from one another.

This is often observed in homes which have many siblings or amongst friends. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, created each person with their own unique path in life, which is different from others. This is a sign of His infinite power. Billions of people yet, no two paths are the same. The differences in these paths are the main cause why people drift apart from each other. Best friends become friends only by name. Close siblings become emotionally distant from one another. This is a part of destiny and is truly inevitable. It is important to understand this point as some people can become ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted, because of it. They dislike the changes in their lives which lead to the changes in their relationships with others. But these changes in their lives are something Allah, the Exalted, chose so disliking them is disliking the choice of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should instead see things in a positive way. Meaning, they should have hope that one day in the hereafter the strong fellowship they once shared with someone will once again be forged but to a much higher and unbreakable level. This hope should inspire a Muslim to be more obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience knowing that this outcome will only be granted to His obedient servants. In addition, it will cause a Muslim to desire and supplicate for their companion to also strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. They will also be rewarded for acting on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. So adopting this mentality will help a Muslim to avoid ingratitude, strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and gain more reward all the while hoping they will once again be blessed with a strong bond they once shared with their companion. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 47:

“And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other.”

Gentleness

After the Battle of the Camel, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke very kindly to the Muslims who had fought against him and made it clear they had nothing to fear from him. He respected their decision to fight against him and never held it against them. As a result they swore allegiance to him and swore to obey him. He showed extra kindness to the two sons of Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, may Allah be pleased with him, Musa and Imran, may Allah have mercy on them. After they pledged allegiance to him, so did the other soldiers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 88.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was not interested in fighting or taking revenge on anyone, he only desired unity amongst the Muslims.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themself more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely

to commits sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return then if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you…”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Letting Things Go

None of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who disagreed with each other ever harbored negative feelings for each other, as they all did what they did out of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of worldly gain or out of spite towards another person. For example, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once had two people flogged as they cursed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. Ammar Ibn Yasir, who was on the side of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, in the Battle of the Camel, harshly criticized those who criticized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 93.

Ali, also provided Aisha, may Allah be pleased with them, with all the provisions she needed to return home and gave her an honorable send-off. Before she departed she told the people that they only believed action (against the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him) should have been taken more quickly. And that no person should use the events which occurred at the Battle of the Camel as a reason for transgressing against others. She concluded, that despite their difference opinions she regarded Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, as one of the best. In reply, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, stated that she was sincere in her actions and reminded others that she was the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in this world and in the next. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 109.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

Migration of Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA) to Kufa

Moving the Caliphate

After the Battle of the Camel, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, continued his resolve to move to Kufa. He desired to be closer to the source of the sedition and problems within the Islamic empire so that he could deal with it personally and directly. On his arrival he urged the people to do what was good and forbade them from evil. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 148.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other

misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Disagreement between Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA) & Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan (RA)

The Battle of Siffeen

Further Problems

After the shirt of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, which he was wearing when he was martyred reached Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, the governor of Syria, may Allah be pleased with him, and the people of Syria, they grew angry and became adamant on seeking justice from his killers. They adopted the same attitude Aisha, Talha and Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with them, adopted, as they all believed things would not be rectified within the Islamic empire until the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, were not punished immediately. They withheld their oath of allegiance to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, until their demands were met. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to first deal with the seditions which were spread across the Islamic empire and after they settled down, he would deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. He believed dealing with them immediately would only ignite the seditions and turmoil in the land further. Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, feared that this plan would allow the rebels to grow stronger and cause further problems across the Islamic empire.

As Mu’awiyah was related to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, he believed it was his right to seek legal retaliation immediately. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 33:

“And do not kill the soul [i.e., person] which Allāh has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law].”

The fighting which took place between Ali and Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, was based on their difference of opinion in regards to the killers of the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. Mu’awiyah, was a relative of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, and therefore believed he had a right to seek revenge on the killers personally. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, disagreed with him as he was the Caliph and would therefore deal with the killers directly in his way. Their disagreement had nothing to do with wealth and authority, as this clearly contradicted their past actions and sincerity. Their sincerity and past actions have been praised directly by Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As they were always sincere to Allah, the Exalted, it is not fair to assume they fought for the sake of worldly things. Rather, one must judge the hidden intention of someone by their past conduct and authentic evidence, which may be in their favour or against them. If one assesses their past conduct and evidence regarding their characters, evidence taken directly from the Holy Quran and the authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, then it becomes clear that a sensible person can only interpret their disagreement in the best of ways, meaning, their disagreement was based on their sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of worldly gains.

In addition, Ali, only fought Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, after all attempts at reconciliation had failed and he intended for Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, to follow the command of Allah, the Exalted, and hear and obey the Caliph, and to bring about unity in the Muslim state. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verses 9-10:

"And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy."

Fighting in this case has been commanded. If Muslims run away from this command and stay in their houses and refuse to stand against those who are wrong for the sake of the truth, then no legal punishments would be carried out and no falsehood would be confronted. Then the hypocrites and evildoers would find it easy to violate all sacred limits, confiscate the wealth of the Muslims, take their people captives and shed their blood, because they would gang up against them and the Muslims would refrain from confronting them by saying that they are forbidden to fight against other

Muslims. Therefore, fighting in the case mentioned in the verse is necessary.

In addition, both sides acknowledged that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was worthy of being Caliph and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, never challenged that. The superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and the virtues of Ali, were well-known and acknowledged by Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them. Neither of them differed on bringing the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, to justice. They only differed on how to achieve this. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, rightfully believed that seeking legal retaliation from the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, needed to wait until the Islamic state became settled, as seditions and turmoil spread like wild-fire across the Islamic state after the killing of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that if revenge was taken immediately, then it would only give the remaining rebels another excuse to rebel further as they would claim they were being silenced for commanding good and forbidding evil. This would have only led to more chaos and disunity amongst the Muslims, especially, the ignorant ones. By first taking steps to stabilizing the different cities within the Islamic empire and then taking legal retribution against the killers, would have prevented further turmoil and chaos within the society. Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, disagreed with this idea and desired for the killers to be punished immediately and as a result he held his pledge of allegiance to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, until his demand was met. This resulted in fighting between the two.

Three groups emerged from this disagreement, all of whom based their decisions on the following verses. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verses 9-10:

“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”

One group believed the Caliph Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was in the right and deserved to be heard and obeyed according to the teachings of Islam and therefore joined him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you…”

Others believed Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, was correct and therefore joined him. A third group were unsure on who was more right and therefore concluded they could not fight any side as long as they were unsure and therefore they refrained from getting involved. Each of the groups consisted of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and sincere Muslims.

Finally, as both of them possessed a high level of Islamic knowledge and noble character, they were both on the level of independent reasoning. This allows one to apply the teachings of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with their professional unbiased judgement in order to derive a ruling within Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when this scholar makes an incorrect ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over. According to this both Ali and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, will be rewarded for their differing opinions by Allah, the Exalted.

Ali, send an envoy and a letter to Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, informing him of the Battle of the Camel and reminding him that all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, unanimously appointed him the Caliph and he should therefore pledge allegiance and allow him to deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, in his own way. But after consulting the senior officials of Syria, Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted that he would only pledge allegiance after the killers were brought to justice.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then marched towards Syria hoping to correct things before they went out of hand.

When both sides reached Siffeen, some small skirmishes took place between the two armies, as neither side wanted to take part in an all-out fight, as it would have led to many Muslim fatalities.

Many Companions, such as Abu Darda and Abu Umamah, may Allah be pleased with them, came to reconcile between the two sides but they attempts failed and so they withdrew and did not take part in any fighting.

They were attempts from both sides to reconcile yet neither side changed their stance.

During the fighting Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that any Muslim soldier who fought believing they were sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and was killed, would enter Paradise, irrespective of the side they were on.

During the fighting Ammar Ibn Yasir, who was fighting on the side of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, criticized a soldier on his side for labelling the Syrian army as disbelievers. He corrected him and said that the Syrian army had transgressed against them and they were fighting them because of this transgression. Their God was One, their Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was one, and their prayer direction was one. Ammar Ibn Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, was eventually martyred in this battle. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned that Ammar, may Allah be pleased with him, would be killed by a group that was in the wrong. His martyrdom was one of the main reasons which encouraged the side of Mu’awiyah to reconcile with Ali, may Allah be

pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 19-22, 36-37 & 142-159.

Calling for a Truce

The Battle of Siffeen raged on for some time and the armies became exhausted.

When Ash'ath Ibn Qays, who was one of the generals of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, witnessed many Muslim deaths, he told his soldiers that if they continued to fight then they would all be killed and no one would be left to protect the Islamic empire, the women and the children. News of what he said reached Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, and he agreed with him and added that the Romans and Persians would take this opportunity and attack Syria and Iraq. In fact, the Roman king took this opportunity and marched towards Islamic territory hoping to capture it. Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to him. He urged him to return to his land otherwise he would reconcile with Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and they would both attack him together. The Roman king withdrew after receiving this threat.

Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded his soldiers to tie the Holy Quran to the end of their spears in order to call for a truce and discuss the matter peacefully in light of the Holy Quran so that a judgement between the two armies could be made. Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, agreed with him and commented that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, would not refuse coming to the book of Allah, the Exalted, for judgement. In fact, when the Holy Quran was brought to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and the following verse was recited to him,

he responded that he would be the first to submit to the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 23:

“Do you not consider those who were given a portion of the Scripture? They are invited to the Scripture of Allāh that it should arbitrate between them; then a party of them turns away, and they are refusing.”

Suggesting that this was somehow a trick against Ali so that Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, could avoid defeat and regroup at a later date against him is a blatant slander. As history proves, Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, was no coward and dying for the sake of what he thought was the correct path was something he was always eager for. In addition, using the Holy Quran to deceive someone completely contradicts his and any other Companion’s, may Allah be pleased with them, attitude and character. This was the attitude of the troublemakers, not the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, feared for the collapse of the Islamic nation if fighting continued and therefore called for a truce. He even wrote to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that neither of them expected the fighting to reach such an intense level, otherwise they would never have fought in the first place. He urged Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to reconcile as it was not too late to correct what was between them. It was the troublemakers who urged the fighting to continue as they desired the collapse of the Islamic nation but their evil motives were quashed by this reconciliation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 160-174 & 178-179.

Adhering to Noble Manners

Even during the Battle of Siffeen, both sides adhered to good manners. For example, they would not deprive each other from the water source in the land. They would stop fighting in order to pray. When fighting stopped, the soldiers from each side would enter the oppositions camp in order to talk to their friends and relatives. They respected the Muslims killed and arranged funeral prayers for them, even if they were soldiers from the opposite camp. The prisoners were treated with kindness. If they captives swore to stop fighting they were released with all their equipment. If they refused to stop fighting they were detained until the fighting was over. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 173-176.

All these characteristics indicate that they were not fighting were worldly motives. Rather, they were fighting out of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, believing that they were in the right. This is the reason they did not transgress the rights of the soldiers from the opposite camp. If they fought for worldly reasons, they would have certainly not behaved in such a good manner with each other.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of adopting noble character.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be

rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

Doubtful and Unlawful

It is important to note that all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, tried their hardest to create unity between the Muslims and to avoid fighting. Those who refrained from taking sides during the Battles of the Camel and Siffeen, cannot be criticized and were not criticized by any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who did take sides in the matter. Those who refrained taking sides were obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who made it clear that it was always best to refrain from things which create doubt. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. As these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were confused about who to support, they adopted the correct attitude and refrained from taking sides. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who took sides did so as they judged their opinions on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and so they are all free of blame. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when a scholar makes an incorrect ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for Muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a Muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

In addition, when Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, was questioned why he did not get involved, he replied that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, say that Allah, the Exalted, loves the anonymous servant. This incident has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432.

Being anonymous means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd

of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

Preparing for Judgement Day

When returning from the Battle of Siffeen, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, passed a Muslim graveyard and prayed for the inhabitants. He commented that glad tidings were for the one who remembers the Resurrection, prepares themself for the Reckoning and is content with the little that they have been given in this world. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 180-181.

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

"O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life…"

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call

of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

A Foul Trait

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, harshly criticized anyone who cursed Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, and the Muslims who fought on his side. He would urge them to instead pray for Allah, the Exalted, to have mercy on both sides and reconcile things between them. Nor did Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, allow his people to curse Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and his followers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 182.

Cursing is when one supplicates for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone else. Only Allah, the Exalted, is aware of who deserves to be cursed and deprived of His mercy. Therefore, one should avoid this foolish habit. Cursing someone who does not deserve it is a foul act and the one who desires the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from someone else may find that it is removed from them instead. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2019, that a true believer does not curse. The Muslims who have the habit of cursing are so disliked by Allah, the Exalted, that they will be deprived of being witnesses and intercessors on the Day of Judgment. Allah, the Exalted, will dislike showing them off to the rest of creation on the Last Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6610.

Finally, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6652, highlights the severity of cursing a believer. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, declared that cursing a believer is like killing them.

Even if one deserves to be cursed it is safer and wiser to abstain and instead utter words which will please Allah, the Exalted, such as His remembrance.

Striving for Peace

After the Battle of Siffeen was over both sides agreed to hold a meeting in order to reconcile between the two groups. Ali Ibn Abu Talib appointed Abu Musa Al Ashari and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan appointed Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with them, as their representatives and arbitrators. They all pledged to strictly follow the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when deciding on how to reconcile. Both leaders pledged to accept the verdict agreed on by their two representatives. This arbitration had nothing to do with who should be Caliph, as neither side had an issue with Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, being the Caliph. The issue that needed to be reconciled was how and when to deal with the killers of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him.

Even though both sides desired unity, none the less, the two arbitrators could not agree on a plan. Both sides desired to deal with the killers of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, in their own way and so no deal was made. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 207-209 & 273.

Generally speaking, Muslims must strive to adopt the characteristics which encourage unity amongst Muslims.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the

Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themself. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themself as perfect while

seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom’s worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

The Renegades (Kharijites)

The New Rebels

Even though the sincere Muslims were pleased with the arbitration between Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, the troublemakers were not, as they realised it was only a matter of time before they were brought to justice for killing Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. They then launched another scheme whereby they misguided ignorant Muslims into believing that leaving the judgement of the nation up to people contradicts faith and should therefore be rejected and fought against. This was an extremely foolish thing as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicate the importance of people judging according to justice. They were countless judges appointed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Caliphs after him, may Allah be pleased with them, who judged between the people over their affairs. For example, the Holy Quran has urged a married couple having difficulties to choose wise judges in order to arbitrate between them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 35:

"And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will cause it between them…"

The judge who judges according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has judged according to the judgement of Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were involved in the arbitration between Ali and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them. This is the correct interpretation of the verses the rebels misinterpreted. For example, chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 57:

"…The judgement is only for Allāh…"

These rebels would even label Muslims as disbelievers because of their extreme views. For example, they believed that the one who committed a major sin loses their faith. As a result they rebelled against Ali, for accepting to reconcile with Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them. This group of rebels the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against.

For example, in the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war a hypocrite named Dhu Al Khuwaysira commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not acting justly. The Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, grew angry and replied that if he did not act with justice then who would. When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission to kill this obvious hypocrite the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him and commented that this man would eventually lead a rebellious faction who will enter and exit the faith of Islam just like an arrow enters and emerges from its target. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 492-493.

Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6934, discuss these rebels. These rebels challenged the leadership of the fourth rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. This Hadith, like many others, indicates that the rebels in most cases were devoted worshippers of Allah, the Exalted, but the thing which caused them to deviate from the true teachings of Islam was their ignorance. They foolishly gave worship more value than gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Their ignorance caused them to misinterpret the teachings of Islam which led to their heinous sins. If they possessed true knowledge this would not have happened.

It is important for Muslims to understand how knowledge can prevent sins especially, towards others, such as domestic abuse. One only refrains from wronging others when they fear the consequences of their actions meaning, being held accountable and punished by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. But the foundation and root of fear of the consequences of one's actions is knowledge. Without knowledge one will never fear the consequences of their actions. This will allow their ignorance to encourage them towards committing sins and wronging others.

If society desires to reduce the cases of domestic abuse and other crimes against people they must give priority to gaining and acting on knowledge as worship alone will not cause this to happen just like it did not prevent the rebels from deviating from Islam and causing great distress for innocent people. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

Dealing with the Rebels

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was eager to guide the rebels back to the main body of the Muslims. Therefore, he gave permission to Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, to debate with them.

The rebels claimed to have three issues with Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. The first was that they believed that he left the judgement of arbitration between him and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, to men, when Allah, the Exalted, declares judgement belongs to Him only. The second was that he fought against the Muslims, such as the group of Aisha, Talha, and Az Zubair and the army led by Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, yet he took no war booty (apart from their weapons) or captives from them. If they were disbelievers then he should have taken war booty and captives. If they were believers, he should not have fought them in the first place. The third issue they had was that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, erased his title of Caliph and the Commander of the Believers from the arbitration document between him and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, answered all there foolish issues according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He reminded them that the judgement of Allah, the Exalted, must be applied by people through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He recited the following verses as evidence: Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 95:

“O you who have believed, do not kill game while you are in the state of iḥrām. And whoever of you kills it intentionally - the penalty is an equivalent from sacrificial animals to what he killed, as judged by two just men among you…”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 35:

“And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will cause it between them…”

In respect to their second point, he told them that as long as they were Muslims, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, was their mother and it was not lawful to take her as a captive slave. No sane person would accept this. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 6:

“The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are their mothers…”

Regarding their third issue, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, erased his title of the Messenger of Allah, the

Exalted, from the pact of Hudaibiya, with his own hands, when the non-Muslims objected to it and instead wanted him to write his name. He did this in order to complete the pact, for the sake of peace. If he did this, then Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was following his example in removing his title from the document of arbitration between him and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them.

As a result nearly two thousand rebels repented from their rebellion but the rest remained firm on their clear misguidance and greed for gaining worldly things, such as wealth and authority in the land.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, only fought them in self-defense as he made it clear that he would give them the rights that any Muslim deserves as long as they did not break the laws of Islam or show clear signs of disbelief. He warned them not to shed blood, terrorize people or engage in looting people on the roads. Otherwise he would declare war on them. As the rebels considered the Muslims who disagreed with them as disbelievers, whose blood and wealth they thought were lawful for them, they began to kill Muslims and plunder their wealth.

They urged Ali, not to arbitrate with Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, even though they had all agreed to this beforehand. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, refused as he did not want to betray his word and arbitration was the right thing to do. These rebels agreed to leave the cities they were living in and joined forces at Nahrawan, in Iraq. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 260-264 & 268-273.

These rebels were devoted worshippers but were extremely ignorant and possessed little Islamic knowledge. As a result they were easily swayed by their evil leaders and their evil desires for worldly things, such as wealth and leadership. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-105:

“Say, "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become worthless; and We will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight [importance].”

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

“…and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…”

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themself from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

A Great Slander

After the arbitration between Ali Ibn Abu Talib and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, ended without reconciliation, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, invited the rebels stationed in Nahrawan to join him in his expedition to Syria. They refused to join him until he testified and repented from committing an act of disbelief by allowing people to judge the matter between him and Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 273.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

"…And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it…"

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a Muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a Muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

Respecting Life

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, warned the rebels not to shed blood, terrorize people or engage in looting people on the roads otherwise he would declare war on them. As the rebels considered the Muslims who disagreed with them as disbelievers, whose blood and wealth they thought were lawful for them, they began to kill Muslims and plunder their wealth. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 273.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 68:

"…or kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed], except by right…"

The true servants of Allah, the Exalted, respect all forms of life. They obey the teachings of Islam which clearly prescribes that mercy should be shown to all of creation. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6028, that whoever does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. Islam not only advises the kind treatment of people but also prescribes it for animals. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. No other religion places such value on human life. The Holy Quran compares the killing of one

innocent person to the killing of the whole of mankind. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 32:

"…kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely…"

This verse alone is enough to deter those people who claim to be killing innocent people in the name of Islam. This verse proves that their real evil intention is to gain wealth and power which has nothing to do with Islam.

Not harming others is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until other people irrespective of their faith are safe from their tongue and actions. If this is the case for only harming others how can Islam permit the killing of innocent people? In fact, this is answered in this same Hadith. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warns that a person cannot be a true believer until the lives and belongings of others are not safe from their actions.

Those who claim to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should know that he never harmed another person unless it was in self-defence against a male soldier. He

never harmed a woman, the elderly or a child. In fact, he never took revenge for himself and only applied the punishment ordained by Allah, the Exalted, as the head of state to those who crossed the limits. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. This is how Muslims must behave under all circumstances if they claim to be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

A Muslim has been given permission to defend themself, their families and belongings. But all of this has limits. In no way does a Muslim have permission to strike first and take the life of an innocent person. Muslims should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated meaning, with respect and mercy.

The Battle of Nahrawan

Fighting the Rebels

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, warned the rebels not to shed blood, terrorize people or engage in looting people on the roads otherwise he would declare war on them. As the rebels considered the Muslims who disagreed with them as disbelievers, whose blood and wealth they thought were lawful for them, they began to kill Muslims and plunder their wealth. On one occasion they killed Abdullah Ibn Khabbab, the son of a great Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, because he disagreed with their actions. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded them to hand his killers over to him for legal retaliation. When they arrogantly replied that they had all killed him, he marched towards them. After reaching their location in Nahrawan, he sent messengers to them encouraging them to sincerely repent but they refused. They even killed some of his messengers, something which has always been regarded as forbidden by every nation and religion.

Even before the battle began Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had a banner raised and announced to the rebels that whoever came to the banner would be safe and whoever fled the battlefield would be safe. Many of them fled but around 1000 rebels remained firm on fighting.

Many years prior to this battle, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had given a detailed description of one of the

leaders of these rebels. After the fighting was over, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded for him to be found and he was found amongst the dead.

Even after the battle Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, still treated the remaining rebels with respect. He commanded his army not to pursue anyone who fled and not to kill any of the wounded rebels. He did not take their womenfolk as captives either. He even took their property to Kufa and told the people to take whatever was theirs meaning, he did not divide the spoils of war amongst his soldiers. He only divided their weapons and horses, the things they used when they were fighting. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 273-280.

Generally speaking, this event reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the

Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Standing Firm

Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, believed he was doing the right thing according to the teachings of Islam by insisting on seeking justice against the killers of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. So he continued marching against these killers wherever they were hiding. He sent an army to Egypt, which was one of the main cities occupied by the killers, and took it over. As a response, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, insisted that his followers fight Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, as he was failing to obey the appointed Caliph and was instead taking justice into his own hands. The troublemakers continued to sow discord amongst the people. War had caused great fatigue to the people and they became reluctant to fight. But Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted they needed to defend the Islamic nation from people acting beyond the law and taking justice into their hands when they should be obeying the Caliph. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, gave many sermons encouraging the people to defend their land and fight for the sake of stabilizing the Islamic empire. Due to the disunity within the side of Ali he was forced to make an agreement with Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them. They agreed that Ali would control Iraq and Mu'awiyah would control Syria, may Allah be pleased with them, and neither would interfere in the others affairs. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 605-610.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themself or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one

who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…"

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's

duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah," and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

The Correct Perception

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was once told the public treasury had become filled with gold and silver. After magnifying and praising Allah, the Exalted, he summoned the people of Kufa and handed out all of it until the treasury was empty. He would often sweep it clean and pray inside it, hoping thereby that it would testify in his favour on the Day of Judgement.

On another occasion, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was wearing a simple cloak during a cold day. When he was encouraged to take a share from the public treasury for himself and his family, he replied that he did not take anything from the public treasury and he was content with the cloak he was wearing which he brought from Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 358-360.

This not only indicates the great sincerity he possessed for the people but also his focus on preparing for the hereafter over obtaining and enjoying the material world. One can adopt the correct attitude when they obtain the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…”

Ties that Bind

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would urge the people to uphold their ties of kinship. He once commented that the people must honour their relatives, for they are their wings by which they fly. With their relatives support, one can achieve what they want and they are an aid during times of difficulty. One should honour their prominent relatives, visit their sick, seek their advice and help the one who is going through hardship. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 373.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of

kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

"…And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer."

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed…”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or servers links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Modesty

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed complete modesty and as a result it allowed him to adopt other noble qualities. For example, he once said that he felt shy before Allah, the Exalted, of there being any wrong done to him that was greater than his ability to forgive, that anyone should treat him in an ignorant manner that is greater than his patience, that there should be any fault in a person that could not be covered by his concealment or that there should be any need that cannot be fulfilled by his generosity. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 375.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, modesty includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

"…and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.

The Night Prayer

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was once questioned about his vigorous regime of fasting by day and worshipping at night. He replied that the journey to the hereafter is long and needs to be crossed by travelling at night. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 377.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that

those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themself out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Words of Wisdom – 1

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised Kameel Ibn Ziyad, may Allah have mercy on him, that people are of three types: the devoted scholar, the one who seeks knowledge in order to save themself and the worthless riffraff who follow every caller, bending with every wind. They do not seek guidance with knowledge and they do not hold onto a strong pillar and support. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 348.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everything in this material world is cursed except the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, what is connected to it, the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge.

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses all the levels of remembrance. Namely, internal silent remembrance, which includes correcting one's intention so that they only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue and the most important is practically remembering Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Anything which leads to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, includes the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as striving in the material world in order to fulfill one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. In reality, this includes any action which appears worldly or religious as long as it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Both the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge are the only people in reality who will obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly as this is not possible to achieve without knowledge. An ignorant person disobeys Allah, the Exalted, without even realizing it as they are unaware of what counts as a sin or a righteous deed. In some cases, one may even believe they are strictly obeying Him even though they are far from it.

To conclude, in reality nothing is really cursed in the material world in itself. It is how a thing is used which determines if it is cursed or not. For example, if wealth is used correctly according to the teachings of Islam then it is a great blessing in both worlds. But if it is misused or hoarded then it will become a curse for its owner in both worlds. This can be applied to all things in this world.

Words of Wisdom – 2

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that knowledge is superior to wealth: knowledge protects a person, whereas wealth needs to be protected. Wealth decreases with spending, whereas knowledge increases with it. Knowledge is a faith to be followed. It helps one practice sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and leaves a beautiful legacy after their death, whereas the benefits of wealth cease with its ceasing. And knowledge rules, while wealth is ruled over. The learned remain as long as the world remains. Their persons may be lost, but their teachings live on in the hearts' of people. This has been discussed in Imam Abu Na'im Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Ul Awliya Wa Tabaqat Al Asfiya, Narration 164.

Knowledge teaches one how to use their blessings correctly therefore ensuring they benefit from them in both worlds. Whereas, wealth will be left behind and not aid one at the time of their death, in their grave and on Judgement Day.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for Muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a Muslim does not use their blessings correctly they will become a burden for them in both worlds. And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or their inheritor will misuse the blessings which will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings as this is a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day.

Words of Wisdom – 3

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once said that a true scholar is the one who does not make others despair from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, nor do they make them feel safe from His punishment." This has been discussed in Ibn Al Jawzi's, Sifatul Safwah, 1/170

This indicates the importance of striking a balance between fear and hope in Allah, the Exalted.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who

fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

Commanding Correctly

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned that one of the reasons why people have little interest in seeking knowledge is that they observe how a knowledgeable person benefits little from their knowledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 356.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who contradicts their own advice when commanding good and forbidding evil will be punished in Hell.

Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by advising only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, many people advise for other reasons, such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, some scholars often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side as they desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their advice and thus they now have little positive influence over their listeners. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective.

Muslims should strive to always act on their own advice before commanding others to do so as behaving in this manner is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

This does not mean one must become perfect before advising others as this is not possible. Instead, they should correct their intention and prove this through their actions by striving to act on their own advice before advising others. Only with this attitude will they avoid the punishment mentioned in this Hadith. The failure in acting on this principle has caused the advice of Muslims to become ineffective even though the number of advisers has dramatically increased over the years.

A Simple Life

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would dress in simple clothing, like his predecessors. He was once in the marketplace where he was recognized by some of the merchants as the Caliph. He then refused to purchase anything from them and instead bought a shirt for three silver coins from a boy who did not recognize him. The boy's father, later came to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, offering him a silver coin as a partial refund, claiming the shirt was worth only two silver coins. But Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he was happy with what he paid for and the boy was happy with what he charged.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, did not allow people to show him favoritism when he was Caliph. In addition, his attitude indicates the simple life he adopted. He also adopted a simple life in order to encourage others to do the same. A simple life encourages one to prioritize preparing for the hereafter over enjoying this material world. For example, when he was asked why he wore patched shirts he replied that it was more humbling to the spiritual heart and an example for the believer to follow. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 361-362.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Good Spending

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, did not place a brick on top of another brick nor a stone over another stone meaning, he did not build homes for himself. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 363.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on buildings.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one's needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often leads a Muslim to adopt hopes for a long life as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one's hope for a long life the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it causes one to

dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, Muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things not just construction so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

Aspects of Asceticism

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that asceticism had three parts, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 365.

The first aspect of asceticism is not possessing hopes for a long life.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the

things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themself. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

The second aspect of asceticism is being grateful for the blessings one has been granted.

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“…And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one’s intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

The last aspect of asceticism is refraining from unlawful things.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for Muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a Muslim’s faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

Words of Wisdom – 4

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised the following pieces of advice, which has been recorded in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 157.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a person should only hope in Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then

hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the Muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some Muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

The next thing Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised is that a person should not fear anything except their sins.

Sins have been classified as minor and major. Over time many definitions have been given regarding what exactly a major sin is. One simple classification is that any sin which Islam has commanded the Islamic government to punish is classed as a major sin. Another classification is that if any sin is mentioned with Hellfire, the anger of Allah, the Exalted, or the curse of Allah, the Exalted, then it is a major sin. For example, backbiting is a major sin as it is cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer."

Some Muslims believe there are only seven major sins which have been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2766. But they fail to realize that even though these seven are major sins it does not mean that they are only seven. In fact, there are other Hadiths which mention other major sins such as, disobeying parents. This Hadith is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. The seven major sins declared in the Hadith quoted earlier are: polytheism, magic, killing an innocent, dealing with financial interest, usurping the wealth of orphans, fleeing a battlefield and accusing an innocent woman of fornication.

It is important to note, that when one persists on minor sins they become major in the sight of Islam.

Major sins are only forgiven with sincere repentance whereas minor sins can be erased by avoiding the major sins and performing righteous deeds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 31:

"If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins…"

Sincere repentance includes regret, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should ensure they avoid all types of sins irrespective of size as one of the traps of the Devil is that he inspires Muslims to disregard small sins. One should always remember that mountains are made up of small stones.

The next thing Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised is that a person should not feel embarrassed to admit that they do not know something.

Some have adopted a strange attitude. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as in intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

The next thing Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised is that patience is to faith like the head is to the body, and there is nothing good in a body which has no head.

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. But a higher and more rewarding level than patience is contentment. This is when a Muslim deeply believes that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants and they therefore prefer His choice over their own. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

A patient Muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the

Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register[1] before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a Muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a Muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient Muslim truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a Muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This Muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they

experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

It is important to know that Allah, the Exalted, tests those He loves. If they show patience they will be rewarded but if they are angered it only proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2396.

A Muslim should be patient or content with the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and hardship. This will reduce one's distress and provide them with much blessings in both worlds. Whereas, impatience will only destroy the reward they could have received. Either way a Muslim will go through the situation decreed by Allah, the Exalted, but it is their choice whether they desire reward or not.

A Muslim will never reach full contentment until they behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A Muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A Muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a Muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent Muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a Muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content Muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a Muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a Muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

“…and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut

their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel."”

If a Muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a Muslim who is constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

Increasing Blessings

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that blessings are connected to gratitude and gratitude leads to more blessings. They are attached to one another, so more blessings from Allah, the Exalted, will not stop coming unless gratitude from the person ceases. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 383.

Gratitude involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it

does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

A Beautiful Sermon – 2

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 391.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that the nations before them were destroyed when the general public committed sins and the devoted scholars and rabbis did not forbid them from it. Therefore, the people must command good and forbid evil before they are punished like those before them were. He concluded, that commanding good and forbidding evil does not stop one's provision from reaching them nor does it bring one's death closer to them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Consulting the Wise

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would urge others to always consult the wise in their affairs. For example, he once advised that consultation is the essence of guidance. The one who bases their actions on their own opinions without consulting others is in grave danger. On another occasion he commented that seeking consultation was a great support and an aspect of bad preparation is failing to consult someone.

He once advised someone to not consult a miser, as they will advise others to fear poverty and forbid others from being generous. They should not consult a coward as they will weaken the resolve of others. They should not consult someone who is covetous, as they will encourage others to accumulate things by unjust means.

He once advised that the best people one can consult are people of reason and knowledge and people of experience and resolve. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 393 & 628.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

“…So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…”

Under Your Care

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised his governor in Egypt to only appoint people to leadership roles based on their qualifications and not on the basis of favoritism or preference. Appointing people to official positions on the basis of favoritism is injustice and an act of betraying Allah, the Exalted, and it causes great harm to the people. For positions of authority, he should choose people who were pious, dignified, knowledgeable and kind. He should ensure that they were experienced, intelligent and modest people from righteous families, who were religiously committed, because they are the noblest in attitude and more careful in protecting themselves from error. They are far from greed and are more aware of the consequences of things than others. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 393-394.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one’s children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Holding to Justice

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once lost his shield and found it in the possession of a Jew who claimed it was his. The case was taken to a Muslim judge who asked Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to bring witnesses to testify the shield was his. When he named his sons as witnesses the judge refused to accept their testimony, as a son, in this type of legal case, cannot testify on behalf of his father. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that his sons were the leaders of the youth of Paradise yet the judge would not accept their testimony. The judge ruled in favour of the Jew. The Jewish man was astonished how the Muslim judge ruled against the Caliph of the Muslims and as a result he accepted Islam and returned the shield back to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, refrained from taking the shield back as the judge had ruled it belonged to the Jewish man. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also gave the man a horse as a gift. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 395.

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and

actions. For example, a Muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

Equality

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give equal sums of wealth from the public treasury to the people irrespective of their social status, ethnicity, gender or anything else. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 398.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many Muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam

has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one Muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

A Muslim should therefore busy themself in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Types of Knowledge

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that they were three types of knowledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 408.

The first type is knowledge of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever knows the ninety nine names of Allah, the Exalted, will enter Paradise.

Knowing does not only refer to memorizing them. It actually means to study them and act on them according to one's status and potential. For example, Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favours on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”

When used in reference to the creation merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving according to His infinite status. And adopting this attribute by forgiving others is something which has been encouraged in Islam. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

So the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, can be adopted by Muslims according to their status.

Therefore, Muslims must first understand the meaning of the divine attributes and names and then adopt the meaning of the names in their character through action until they become firmly rooted into their spiritual heart so that they can achieve noble character.

The second and third types are knowledge of what Allah, the Exalted, loves and knowledge of what He hates.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

A Beautiful Sermon – 3

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 409-410.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot

become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, Who set a specific time for them on this Earth. He warned them to hasten towards doing good deeds before death, the destroyer of pleasures, reaches them.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent

and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, Who gave them hearing to understand what they need to understand.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to

another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, Who gave them sight to see the things around them.

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on

their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

“…and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, Who gave them hearts and minds to understand things.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…”

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that they were not created in vain.

The Holy Quran clearly declared the purpose of mankind in chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

Before one can worship Allah, the Exalted, they must first recognise Him as it is not possible to obey someone without knowledge. In addition, people

must first learn how to worship Allah, the Exalted, before they can fulfil this task. Therefore, worship is followed by knowledge. This is why in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared seeking useful knowledge a duty on all Muslims. Without knowledge one will never be able to worship Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Few good deeds performed with knowledge are far superior to many good deeds performed incorrectly because of ignorance.

As Allah, the Exalted, is the One who created mankind no one has the right to be served and worshipped except Him. If an employer easily dismisses their employee for abandoning the duty they have been hired for, how can it be correct to abandon serving and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, when He alone created and sustains the creation? All of mankind have been granted free will and the ability to obey and worship Allah, the Exalted. So each person must decide whether they desire to fulfil their purpose of creation thereby receiving eternal reward or reject it and face punishment in both worlds. The same way a device, such as a mobile phone, which does not fulfil its primary purpose is discarded people may well be discarded on the Day of Judgement into Hell for failing to fulfil their primary purpose of existence.

It is important to note, that worship refers to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This obedience must encompass every part of one’s life and body, such as their tongue. It includes a person’s duty towards Allah, the Exalted, such as offering the prayer and treating the creation with kindness.

Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will be given the best rewards while those who disobey Him will receive the worst punishment in this world and the next. In a divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2466, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, narrates from Allah, the Exalted, who declares that if one busies themself in worshipping Him, through sincere obedience, He will fill their heart with richness and remove their poverty. But if they turn away from His worship and obedience Allah, the Exalted, will fill their life with problems and not remove their poverty.

It is important to note, that Allah, the Exalted, does not need the creation in anyway whatsoever. As clearly mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, people only benefit themselves with their good deeds as it raises their ranks. And they only harm themselves with their sins as they will be held accountable for them. The infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change at all irrespective of if the entire creation worshipped Him or not. Allah, the Exalted, is the sole Creator and sole Provider. It is people who are completely and utterly in need of Him. Whoever understands this and sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the purpose of their creation and will therefore be given an eternal reward.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, had promised them reward for obeying Him during times of ease and hardship.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a Muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a Muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Aspects of Piety

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once mentioned some aspects of piety. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 426.

The first aspect of piety mentioned by Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is fearing Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

The second aspect of piety mentioned by Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is acting according to divine revelation.

This includes both the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere Muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise

him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

The third aspect of piety mentioned by Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is being content with little in this world.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased will not obtain this grace which will cause them to feel as if their possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A Muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the choice. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

If a Muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, they will be provided with peace of mind.

The final aspect of piety mentioned by Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is practically preparing for death.

It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, Muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for Muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A Muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A Muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a Muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”

The Divine Decree

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that nothing happens on Earth until it is decreed in Heaven. There is no one who does not have two Angels appointed to defend them and take care of them until what Allah, the Exalted, has decreed comes to them, whereupon they no longer stand between them and what is decreed for them. No one knows true faith until they realize that what befalls them could never have missed them and what missed them could never have befallen them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 428.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, they are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But they are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

“Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us…”

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

"Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter…"

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…”

A Beautiful Sermon – 4

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 429-430.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that this world is coming to an end and will soon bid farewell and the hereafter is coming and will soon begin.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themself. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that whoever falls short (of obedience) during the days of hope in this world before their death comes, will be doomed.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

“…Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people."

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This

involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to strive hard for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in the hope of reward as they should strive hard for His sake from fear of His punishment.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted,

and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that the one who does not benefit from the truth will be harmed by falsehood.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has promised Paradise to those who obey Him.

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a Muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a Muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All Muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a Muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has warned those who disobey Him of Hell.

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a Muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a Muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be

pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some Muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The Muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-Muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a Muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a Muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A Muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, has warned of Hell for those who disobey Him.

A Balanced Diet

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that hard heartedness comes from a full stomach. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 436.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of a balanced diet. He advised that one should split their stomach into three parts. The first part is for food, the second part is for drink and the last part should be left empty for breathing.

This can be achieved when one stops eating before they reach their fill. This was the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

If people were to act on this advice they would be safe from both physical and mental illnesses. In fact, according to many knowledgeable people one of the main causes of illness is indigestion.

In respect to the heart little food leads to a soft heart, humility of self and weakness of desires and anger. A full stomach results in laziness which prevents worship and other righteous deeds. It induces sleep which causes one to miss out on the voluntary and even the obligatory night prayers. It prevents reflection which is the key to assessing one's deeds and therefore changing one's character for the better. The one with a full stomach forgets the poor and is therefore less likely to help them. All these negative effects lead to a hard heart. The one who possesses a hard heart will not be safe on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

The one who is only concerned about their stomach becomes distracted from more important things, such as learning and acting on religious knowledge. Muslims should know that the most fed in this world will be the hungriest on the Day of Judgment. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2478.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain a balanced diet so that they avoid the negative effects discussed which will undoubtedly hinder their success in both this world and the next.

True Nobility

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that preeminence comes from virtue and good character, not from lineage. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 436.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

Benefit Yourself

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that kindness is one of the best of treasures. One should not be discouraged from doing acts of kindness by the ingratitude of those who reject it. Kindness cannot be complete except with three things: thinking little of it, concealing it and hastening to do it. Thinking little of it makes it great. Concealing it makes it perfect. Hastening it will allow people to enjoy it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 437.

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themself and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“…saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith…”

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor’s good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim’s sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themself by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themself in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself…”

Perfecting Islam

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned that the one who asks about things which do not concern them, will miss out on the things which do concern them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 438.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themself with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of

faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person’s concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as they occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themself with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Importance of Good Companionship

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned that accompanying a foolish person is a loss in this world and a regret in the hereafter. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 438.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear

sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a Muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Social Freedom

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned that a person should not become a slave to any of the creation when Allah, the Exalted, has created them free. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 439.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themself. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are

remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has

been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themself when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freed has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

The Best of People

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once described the best of people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 440-441.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, described the best of people as those who become hopeful when they do righteous deeds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then

hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the Muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some Muslims whose punishment will be reduced by it will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, described the best of people as those who sincerely repent when they commit sins.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of

Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds which has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, described the best of people as those who remain patient when they face trials.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine which their doctor prescribes fully trusting in their

knowledge, experience and choice all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet, many Muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Even though in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a Muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, described the best of people as those who forgive others, when they are angry.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes

of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Qualities of a Believer

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once described some qualities of a believer. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 441.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that when a believer looks at something, they learn a lesson from it.

It is important for a Muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A Muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when Muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

"In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…"

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a Muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themself to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that when a believer is silent, it should be because they are thinking about something important.

Merely performing worship will not raise someone to the highest levels of faith. Muslims can only reach this level by purifying their inner beings. This is achieved by removing the negative characteristics they possess and replacing them with good characteristics. But this is only achieved through serious reflection and self-assessment.

When one recognises their own reality this will encourage them to live like a servant and fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will lead them to recognising Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord, which is the ultimate goal. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

This self-assessment is vital for triggering one to take the steps needed to purify their character and soul of evil characteristics which is the path of success in both worlds. Some are so lost in the material world they never perform this important deed and therefore decades pass by without them changing one single bit. Muslims must use the time of strength they have been given in order to self-assess and change for the better before they reach the final stage of weakness. At this point they will desire to change but they will not possess the intelligence or strength to do so. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412.

One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe those who were given great power and wealth but eventually a time came when their moment of strength ran out and because of their persistent disobedience they were destroyed.

Those who used their moments of strength in the correct way by pleasing Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed by Him in such a way that even after departing from this world they will still be honoured by society.

As the majority of Muslims do not understand the Arabic language an abundant amount of worship will not trigger this inner purification. One can only reach it by reflecting on this material world, death, the grave and Hell. Because of this a single moment of reflection can become better than sixty years of voluntary worship.

Those who live without wisdom or reflection habitually make mistakes which only lead to constant stress. It is these people who lead an aimless life with no higher aspirations and move through each day without understanding their true purpose.

The pious always take time out of their day to reflect on their aims, what actions they have performed and whether they have pleased Allah, the exalted, or not. This mentality will ensure that one avoids sins, performs righteous deeds and if they happen to commit sins to sincerely repent. This mentality fits the advice given by the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Omar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, which is recorded in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 98. He advised that one should judge their own actions before someone else judges them namely, Allah, the exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

This self-assessment is the key which inspires one to sincerely repent and change for the better. This is the best stage compared to the stage where one only realises their mistakes when another points it out to them. But even this stage requires one to possess good friends and relatives who are wise and sincerely concerned over their eternal welfare instead of only being concerned with the material world. A truly blessed Muslim is the one who possesses these types of relatives and friends who aid them to adopt piety.

Reflecting at the start of one's day also ensures a person prioritises their daily tasks and saves time by avoiding those tasks which should be delayed.

The following verse describes the state of successful Muslims. They reflect on and are deeply affected by the teachings of Islam and strive to implement them in their lives. If one is affected in this way they should be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, and show no signs of pride. But if one is not affected in this way they must repent and change before it is too late. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 83:

"And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth…"

A lack of self-reflection has caused Muslims to become lost in the material world even though Islamic knowledge is more readily available then it ever was. Voluntary worship will only take one so far but to reach the height of faith they must reflect and assess their character. This will inspire them to abandon their evil traits and replace them with good ones. The vital ingredient needed to stimulate this self-assessment and reflection is Islamic knowledge which must be obtained from a reliable source. This is one of the reasons the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, that obtaining this type of knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that when a believer speaks, they speak words of wisdom.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss worldly things and things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues like death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

Anonymous Servants

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once gave glad tidings to the unknown sincere servants of Allah, the Exalted, of being saved by Allah, the Exalted, from every dark trial and gaining His mercy. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 441.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who is anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

A Beautiful Sermon – 5

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 443.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that the best means by which a person can draw close to Allah, the Exalted, is faith.

True belief involves sincerity. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themself and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to establish the obligatory prayers, as they are the foundation of religion.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms…”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but

they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer…”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 6:

“…But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it…”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy

Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

"…Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

"So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer."

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as

one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“…and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by

advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to donate the obligatory charity.

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…”

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not let it rain at all.

This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never

change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A Muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to fast the month of Ramadan, as it is a protection against the punishment of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all righteous deeds people perform are for themselves except for fasting as this is for Allah, the Exalted, and He shall reward it directly.

This Hadith indicates the uniqueness of fasting. One of the reasons it is described in this manner is because all other righteous deeds are visible to people, such as the prayer, or they are between people, such as secret charity. Whereas, fasting is a unique righteous deed as others cannot know someone is fasting by only observing them.

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

It is clear from the following verse a person who does not complete the obligatory fasts without a valid reason will not be a true believer as the two have been directly connected. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous"

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a Muslim does not complete a single obligatory fast without a valid reason they cannot make up for the reward and blessings lost even if they fasted every day for their entire life.

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting this habit will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents pride and the encouragement of sins. This is because fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and one's carnal desires. These two things lead to many sins. In addition, the desire for these two things is greater than the desire for other unlawful things. So whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

As briefly indicated earlier there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damages one’s fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number

2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted.

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Finally, a Muslim should aim for the highest reward by keeping their fast a secret and not informing others if it is avoidable as informing others unnecessarily leads to a loss of reward as it is an aspect of showing off.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to uphold their ties of kinship, as it increases love of family and blesses one's life.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A Muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A Muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to donate secret charity, as it expiates sins and extinguishes the wrath of the Lord.

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two

miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes a person who donates secret charity. Even though donating charity publically can invite and encourage others to do the same, which increases one's reward depending on how many people follow their behaviour which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351, yet, donating charity in secret avoids the dangerous sin of showing off, which destroys one's deed. When a Muslim donates in secret it indicates their sincerity to only please Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, this Hadith did not set a limit of how much charity must be donated. So a Muslim has no excuse if they fail to act on this advice as Allah, the Exalted, observes the quality of a deed meaning, a person’s sincerity, not quantity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In addition, charity in Islam is not only restricted to donating wealth. In fact, it encompasses all good deeds, such as commanding good and forbidding evil. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1671. As long as one of these righteous deeds is done in secret without the person mentioning it to others it is hoped they will fulfil this Hadith and be granted shade on Judgment Day.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to remember Allah, the Exalted, much, as it is the best of remembrance.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one’s tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

These stages are the key to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

A Beautiful Sermon – 6

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 446.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people that he feared they would follow whims and desires and that will encourage them to abandon the truth.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..."

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and

attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many

celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people he feared that they would adopt hopes for a long life and that would encourage them to forget the hereafter.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themself. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people he feared that they would adopt hopes for a long life and that would encourage them to forget the hereafter. He added, that the world is coming to an end soon and the hereafter is starting soon. Each one of them has children, therefore they should be from among the children of the hereafter and not from among the children of this world because today is doing deeds with no reckoning and tomorrow is for reckoning with no doing of deeds.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, Muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some Muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

Words of Wisdom – 5

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once gave the following advice, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 447-448.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that words are only good when they are accompanied by actions.

A Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that actions are of no good unless accompanied by a good intention.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward as this Muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themself are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a Muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is when one publically recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publically can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a Muslim’s reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that actions are of no good unless accompanied by a good intention. And no intention is good unless it is accordance with the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by

Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Ensuring Fair Business

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would personally and regularly inspect the market places to ensure people were doing business correctly and fairly. He would move between the different areas quoting verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reminding people how they should do business. He would personally correct bad business transactions. He would often warn the merchants to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to avoid swearing oaths (over the quality of their merchandise) for an oath may help sell the item but it erases the blessings. And he would warn them that traders are evil except the one who fairly takes their dues and pays their dues. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 455-456.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, would often advise his governors to keep a close eye on the merchants. He reminded them that all transactions must be done on a tolerant and easy-going basis, on the basis of fairness and on the basis of prices that are not unfair to either part. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 615-616.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Warning Against Usury

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, warned that only those who possessed Islamic knowledge should sell in their marketplaces otherwise they would consume usury whether they intended to or not. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 458-459.

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the

profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest

works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their greed for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Characteristics of a Judge

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would appoint trustworthy, qualified and reliable people as judges and urged his governors to do the same. For example, he once advised his governor in Egypt to select as a judge the best of the people, someone who was calm in stressful situations, who did not get offended by opponents, who did not get carried away if they made a mistake, who would not be shy of turning towards the truth when they recognized it, who did not have greed and worldly ambitions, who was not content with one explanation before listening to all others, who takes their time and does not rush into passing judgement on difficult issues, who relies most on clear evidence, who does not get upset with people referring to him and coming to him for judgement, who is patient in studying and examining the case until it becomes clear, who is the most decisive once the verdict becomes clear in his mind, who does not become proud if he is praised and is not tempted by worldly things. He told the governor to be generous to such a person so that they will not need the people or be swayed by them. And the governor must show him respect so that the people close to the governor do not believe they can influence the judge in any way. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 471-472.

On another occasion Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a judge must possess the following characteristics: a lack of interest in material gain, a forbearing nature, knowledge of rulings that came before them, willingness to consult the people of knowledge and not fearing the blame of people for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 485.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, once passed judgement in favour of a person who hated him against someone who loved him. When questioned about this he replied that he always passed judgements for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not according to anything else. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 487.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themself harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.[1] So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just…"

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Avoiding Oppression

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would always warn his employees to avoid oppressing others. He once wrote to one of his governors and commanded them to give precedence to Allah, the Exalted, and to the general public over himself, his family and those close to him. If he failed to do that he would become unjust and Allah, the Exalted, would be his opponent on behalf of His slaves. He added, that Allah, the Exalted, answers the prayers of the oppressed and He is watching the oppressors like a guardian on a watchtower. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 472.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt Muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a Muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a Muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a Muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for Muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

Levels of Knowledge

During his Caliphate, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, worked tirelessly in administrating the affairs of the nation according to the correct levels of knowledge. Meaning, according to the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the verdicts of the former Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them, mutual consensus of the learned and in rare cases, independent reasoning. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 473-474.

This process has been explained in an event during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched Mu'adth Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. When leaving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked what he would do if he was brought a case to judge. Mu'adth, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he would judge according to the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in the Holy Quran. He then replied he would judge according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in his traditions. Mu'adth, may Allah be pleased with him, finally replied that he would use independent reasoning meaning, a judgement which runs in line with the Holy Quran and the traditions of

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praised Allah, the Exalted, for giving him a representative that pleased him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 140-141.

Whenever a scholar masters the different sciences of Islam they may reach a level called independent reasoning. This allows them to apply the teachings of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with their professional unbiased judgement in order to derive a ruling within Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when this scholar makes an incorrect ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over.

Religious Freedom

It is important note that even though parts of the Islamic empire increased through fighting yet the goal was never to gain land or power, unlike all other empires in history. The aim was to give the people of foreign lands the opportunity to hear the teachings of Islam, which was being prevented by foreign powers, so that they could willingly either accept or reject Islam. As Islam is a faith which must be accepted by the heart, forcing people to accept Islam through the sword is simply not possible. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong…"

Like his predecessors before him, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured that all people under his rulership had the freedom to choose whether to accept Islam or to reject it.

All the rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them, commanded his leaders and soldiers to respect and fulfill the rights of the citizens of the conquered lands who chose to reject Islam. They gave the same rights to those who accepted Islam all Muslims are owed, even though they might have recently fought against the Muslims. By implementing the teachings of Islam just and peaceful societies were formed and through this many people accepted Islam after witnessing its

widespread benefits and truths. Whether people accepted Islam or not, the Muslims gained the loyalty of the citizens as they acted with justice.

It is clear from history that no other religion which dominated a land ever gave such freedom to the other religions under its authority to practice their faith openly and without fear of persecution.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, continued to remove the need for the poor and disabled to pay the tax (Jizya), which the non-Muslims living in Islamic lands would pay to the government. This tax was also not taken when the state failed to protect and provide the basic public services to the non-Muslims living in Islamic territories. In fact, during the expedition to Syria, during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, when the Muslim armies were forced to retreat to the border of the Roman empire, which eventually led to the Battle of Yarmuk, the tax taken from the non-Muslims in the areas within Syria which the Muslims initially controlled, was given back to the people. When receiving their wealth back the people commented that they hoped that the Muslims would gain victory of the Romans and return to them as the Muslims treated them better than the Romans did. The Romans would take everything from them and leave them with nothing, whereas, the Muslims were returning their wealth to them, even during a time of war. The tax was also not taken when the non-Muslims participated in protecting their land from foreign enemies. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 204-205 & 444-446.

Wishing for the Hereafter

After a truce was made between Ali Ibn Abu Talib and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, the internal conflict and disunity only increased for Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. He then began to wish to leave this world as the people were failing to obey him. He understood a people can only be rightly guided when they desire right guidance. If they do not desire it, then no person will be able to guide them on the right path. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 609-611.

It seems he wished to leave this world as he did not want to be pushed into disobeying Allah, the Exalted. He preferred death to compromising on Islam.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..."

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Martyrdom of Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA)

The End

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was aware he would martyred, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had told him. Some reports even suggest he knew who the killer was namely, the rebel, Abdur Rahman Ibn Maljam. When he was told to execute him, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, refused as Ibn Maljam had not done anything to warrant that. Ibn Maljam and his evil cronies decided to assassinate Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, in order to avenge their misguided brothers who had been killed in the Battle of Nahrawan. Ibn Maljam and two others made a pact that they would separate and each kill Ali, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan and Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with them.

Ibn Maljam and some associates hid outside the home of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. When the latter emerged to lead the dawn congregational prayer Ibn Maljam attacked and fatally wounded him. Ibn Maljam was apprehended and brought to Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Ibn Maljam admitted that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had always treated him well but boldly stated that he hoped his sword would kill the worse person on Earth. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he believed his sword would be used against himself, as he was the worse person in the world. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded that Ibn Maljam be treated well in captivity and if he died from his wounds, he should be executed in legal retaliation but should not be tortured, as this was prohibited in Islam.

The other two men working with Ibn Maljam headed for their targets in the same night. One of them wounded Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, but he later recovered and the third attacked and killed another man thinking it was Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, was sick that day and ordered someone else to lead the dawn congregational prayer and it was this man who was mistakenly killed.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, never appointed a successor as he followed the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and desired the people to decide themselves. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 611-618 & 621-625.

Final Words

On his death bed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, gave the following advice to his family and friends, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 618-622.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, urged them to fear Allah, the Exalted.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their

religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then urged them not to seek worldly luxuries, even if it became available to them and warned them not to weep over worldly loss.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a Muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih

Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A Muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to always speak the truth.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive,

such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to show compassion to orphans and help the destitute.

In this day and age it is very simple to aid orphans as one can support them by aiding them financially through charities without being in close proximity to them. A Muslim should know that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5304, that the one who takes care of an orphan will be in close proximity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Paradise. This Hadith alone should be enough of a reason for a Muslim to strive in aiding orphans as the cost of this is very little. In fact, most people spend more money on their monthly phone bill. Each Muslim should at least sponsor one orphan and encourage others to do the same.

Generally speaking, this includes all types of aiding others not just financial aid. Any type of lawful need of others should be fulfilled according to one's strength and if a Muslim finds they cannot provide this aid then they should direct the needy person to someone who can help them. This will ensure they gain the same reward as the one who aids the needy person. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2671. Muslims must sincerely aid others in ways which benefit them solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without desiring any payback from people as this only leads to their reward being cancelled. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury…”

Simply put, if a Muslim desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need then they must strive to aid others when they are in need. This has

been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. But those who turn away from helping others may well be left stranded in their time of need.

If Muslims desire to demonstrate true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they receive an increase in blessings then they must use the blessings they already possess correctly as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

An aspect of this is helping the needy with whatever one possesses such as good advice.

One should understand a vital point which will prevent them from becoming proud. Namely, the help they offer the needy is not innately theirs. It was created and therefore belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and they must therefore use it according to the wishes of the true owner by helping the needy. In reality, the needy are doing their helper a favor as they will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. If there was no one in need people would lose out on this method of gaining much reward.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to act upon the Book of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them not to fear the blame of a critic when striving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put

them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if it comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally. .

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to forgive others.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps

then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to suppress their anger.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience. This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themself in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

"…who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good."

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage Muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themself until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry Muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely, heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry Muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a Muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88 and 89:

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one’s desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to never stop seeking Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a Muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer even if they do not actually act on it. This is because

Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to change their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some Muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to verify facts before making decisions.

One can imagine how difficult the spreading of unauthentic news is to control especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for Muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many Muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting Muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between Muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A Muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But

He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent Muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to be good neighbours.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6014, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was encouraged to treat neighbours kindly to such an extent that he thought that a neighbour would become an heir of every Muslim.

Unfortunately, this duty is often neglected even though treating one's neighbour kindly is an important aspect of Islam. First of all, it is important to note that a person’s neighbour in Islam includes all those people who are living within forty houses in each direction to a Muslim’s home. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, Number 109.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119,

warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A Muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbour. In fact, a Muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. A Muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour’s property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person, such as financial or emotional support.

A Muslim should always conceal the faults of their neighbours. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publically disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to command good and forbid evil.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to uphold ties with their relatives, so that their reckoning with Allah, the Exalted, would be easy.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but

if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

"…And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer."

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed…”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do

good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or servers links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to take care of the House of Allah, the Exalted, and never forsake it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most

beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised them to cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety and not to cooperate with each other in sin and transgression.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was 63 years old when he was martyred, the same age as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, when they all departed from this world. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 626.

A Fine Description

After the martyrdom of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, his son Hasan Ibn Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, addressed the people with the following words, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Page 627.

Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, said that a man left yesterday who was never preceded by the early ones in knowledge and nor will the latter ones catch him up in it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without

knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, on expeditions and gave him his banner and he would not give up fighting until victory was granted to him.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable Muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, said that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, did not leave behind gold and silver, except 700 silver coins from his salary which he was going to use to purchase a servant for his family.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person’s true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for Muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a Muslim does not use their blessings correctly they will become a burden for them in both worlds. And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or their inheritor will misuse the blessings which will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings as this is a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day.

A Truthful Eulogy

Mu’awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, once asked Dirar As Sada’i to describe Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. Dirar responded by saying: “Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was farsighted and strong. When pronouncing judgement, he was discerning. When commanding, he was just. Knowledge gushed from his person. Wisdom spoke upon his tongue. He shied away from the ornaments of this world, taking solace in the lonely night. He wept much in prayer, thought deeply and turned his hands one over the other, admonishing himself before admonishing others. He favored simple food and plain clothes. He lived amongst us as one of us, responding when asked and answering when questioned. But despite our intimacy, we would approach him with reverent awe, hesitating to call him out for a casual conversation. He respected the pious and was kind to the poor. The powerful did not dare presume upon a favorable ruling and the weak never despaired of his justice. I saw him once when the night had let down its curtain and the stars had set. He stood in his place of prayer with a hand on his beard, writing as one who had been stung by a snake. Weeping grievously, he said: “O world! Tempt someone other than me! Is it me you have come to seduce? It is me you long for? Far be it! Far be it! I have divorced you thrice, a divorce that does not permit reconciliation. Your life is short, you value little. Alas! My provisions are scarce, the distance is long and the journey must be made alone!””

Mu’awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, then wept and responded: “May Allah, the Exalted, have mercy on Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, truly, he was as you describe!”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 2, Pages 628-629.

Conclusion

When one reflects on the life of Ali and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, it is obvious they had nothing but love and respect for one another and any difference of opinions was based on their legitimate and qualified interpretations of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result they will all gain reward for their judgements. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487. Therefore, no one has a right to criticize any of them when it is clear from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them all. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 100:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājireen [Companions from Mecca] and the Anṣār [Companions from Medina] and those who followed them with good conduct - Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”

The one who dislikes any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, should be afraid of becoming a disbeliever, as disbelievers dislike the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, according to the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure. Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that He [i.e., Allāh] may enrage by them [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] the disbelievers…”

The one who dislikes them falls out of the three successful groups mentioned in the Holy Quran and is therefore doomed in both worlds. The first group are the Companions who migrated to Medina from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 8:

“…the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful.”

The second group are the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 9:

“…those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

The final successful group are those who possess no negative feelings towards the Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and are instead their will-wishers. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“…those who come after them, saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.""

Anyone who dislikes and criticizes the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, falls outside these three successful groups and is therefore doomed in both worlds.

Whoever loves Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, has established true faith; whoever loves Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be

pleased with him, has chosen the clear and correct path, whoever loves Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, has been guided by the light of Allah, the Exalted, whoever loves Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, has grasped the firm handhold and whoever loves all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, is free of hypocrisy.

In addition, it is a duty on all Muslims to avoid following in the footsteps of the rebels by succumbing to the trials of doubts and desires. This is only achieved when one sincerely learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby obtaining certainty of faith. This will ensure they remain firm on the right path, the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. It is hoped that the one who sincerely walks their path will end up with them in the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 69:

“And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.”

Furthermore, it is clear when studying the blessed life of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he dedicated all his efforts in pleasing Allah, the Exalted. He supported his verbal declaration of faith by practically obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He did not cherry pick the commands which suited his desires, rather, he submitted completely to

Allah, the Exalted, and diligently implemented every command of Allah, the Exalted, and refrained from every prohibition. His single aim was to please Allah, the Exalted, and all his words and actions were directed to this noble goal. This attitude encouraged him to spiritually detach from the material world, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of according to one's own desires. And he spiritually attached to the hereafter by dedicating his efforts towards practically preparing for it. It was this characteristic which made him and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the best group after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This truth has been discussed in Imam Abu Na'im Al-Asfahani's, Hilyat Ul Awliya Wa Tabaqat Al Asfiya, Narration 278. Therefore, Muslims must follow in his footsteps by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they too achieve peace and success in both worlds.

In addition, when studying his life, it is clear that the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not reach the future generations easily. They reached them through the blood, tears, sweat and sacrifices of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Unfortunately, this fact is often overlooked by Muslims today, as the teachings of Islam are so readily available nowadays. One can imagine how disappointing Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, would be if he could see how the majority of Muslims dismiss the teachings of Islam, even though he and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sacrificed everything so that Islam could reach the future generations. No doubt, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, will receive their rewards for their sacrifices but Muslims must acknowledge the fact that they are indebted to them. This acknowledgement must be shown in actions not just words. This involves sincerely learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the

only way one acknowledges, honors and loves the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Words without actions is closer to hypocrisy than love.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, yet they barely know them as they are too busy to study their lives, characters and teachings. How can one truly love a people they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on their lives, characters and teachings. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

It is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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